



[GERO]: THE ESSENTIALS

<http://www.city.gero.lg.jp/kankou/data/language/e/>

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GETTING HERE

JR Gifu Station → [JR Takayama Main Line · Limited Express Wide View Hida · 1 hr 20 min · ¥3,360] → Gero Station

MAIN FEATURE

Gero: A Hot Spring Steeped in History and Legend

The spring water bubbling forth from beneath the Hida River has been known and used for its recuperative properties ever since the Tenryaku era (947 ~ 956), giving Gero Hot Spring over a millenium of storied history. It really came to the forefront of Japan's hot spring scene, however, during the Edo period (1603 ~ 1868) with the coming of esteemed Confucian scholar and philosopher Hayashi Razan. A distinguished servant of four successive shogun military commanders starting with Tokugawa Ieyasu, Hayashi proclaimed the best *onsen* in the land to be Gero, Arima (in Hyogo Prefecture), and Kusatsu (in Gunma Prefecture). He based this list both on his own personal experiences and on hearsay from others, and with the weight of his word, this designation soon became fixed and accepted throughout Japan.

As legend has it, the "Medicine Buddha" Yakushi Nyorai, disguised as an injured egret, healed its wounds by going into the Hida River, thereby alerting the nearby villagers that there was something special about the water. This led to the discovery of the hot spring source in the river and thus the founding of Gero Hot Spring. The egret is therefore an important symbol in the history and heritage of Gero, and for this reason you will find its image all throughout the hot spring town. There is an abundance of public baths, spas, and *ashiyu* foot-baths in this district, making it the perfect location for a stroll in a yukata (summer kimono)! If you stay at a hotel or inn in Gero, you will be given a yukata there which you can wear outside; many places also offer rentals of colored yukata for women, to make the experience of the *onsen* district even more memorable!

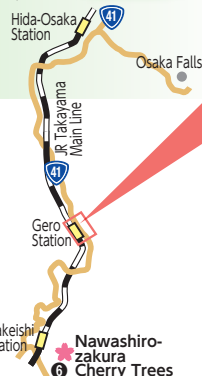


1 "Funsenchi" Bath

Located right on the riverbed of the Hida River near the original hot spring source, the "Funsenchi" open-air *onsen* bath has become a symbol of Gero Hot Spring. This "fountain pool," as the Japanese goes, is free for anyone - of either gender - to enter. A bathing suit is required, however, given how revealed the bath is to its surroundings. It offers a view of Gero's hot spring town and the Hida River that is second to none, so do have a soak in it when visiting!



Embodiments of the egret motif that you will find in Gero include the "Shirasagi Monogatari" sweets - a popular Gero souvenir (right) - and the figures adorning the Gero Ohashi Bridge (above).



"Yu-meguri Tegata" Hot Spring Pass

Available for purchase at the Tourist Information Center next to Gero Station, at participating *ryokan* inns, and at souvenir shops, this Hot Spring Pass is the perfect solution for *onsen* lovers looking to try out a selection of different hot spring baths. The pass enables you to use the baths of any three *ryokan* of your choice from among the 20+ participating locations! You can keep the pass itself as a keepsake of your time in Gero! Valid for 6 months after purchase. ¥1,300



From Mt. Ontake towering at 3,067 meters to Hida Kanayama located at 220 meters above sea level, Gero City lies over a vast area with a topography of many ups and downs. For this reason, visitors can see both sakura cherry blossoms in the spring and autumn foliage for longer periods of time than they would be able to elsewhere, as different parts of Gero bloom and peak at different times. Gero City is most famous for Gero Hot Spring, one of Japan's Three Great Hot Springs. Gero Hot Spring is not just one hot spring that exists in Gero City; rather, the name encompassing the incredible number of different onsen that result from the spring water sprouting forth from the ground all over the city. Among these is Nigorigo Hot Spring, one of the few *onsen* in Japan located at high altitude that remains open throughout the winter season. Gero is also home to bountiful natural environments, so you can refresh your body and your soul by immersing yourself in nature and (literally) in hot springs!

SPECIALTY PRODUCT

"Ryu no Hitomi" Rice

A new strain of rice discovered accidentally in Gero in 2000, "Ryu no Hitomi" ("Eye of the Dragon") has garnered a slew of awards and a wealth of attention in just a short amount of time. With grains 1.5 times the size of other strains, higher elasticity and stickiness, a stronger fragrance, and an unusually sweet taste, "Ryu no Hitomi" is now definitively among the elite, premium rice brands in the country. After having won the grand prize at the annual International Contest on Rice Taste Evaluation, "Ryu no Hitomi" was also been chosen as the best rice in Japan in 2007, 2008, and 2010 in a contest that surveys the general Japanese public! Be sure to get your hands on some while in Gero!

2 Available at the souvenir shop Shirasagi Yokocho

780 Yunoshima, Gero City 9 am ~ 9 pm ☒ None ☎0576-25-4580



Detailed MAP ▶ <http://www.gero-spa.or.jp/english/map.html>

Gero's Famed "Water of Beauties"

The miracle effects of Gero's *onsen* water that make it worthy of one of Japan's Three Great Hot Springs:

- Gero's hot spring water has been shown to help in the treatment of rheumatism, motor dysfunction, neurosis, and neuromyopathy. In addition, it is thought to promote post-illness recuperation as well as overcoming one's fatigue. Its effects are such that places like hospitals and beauty salons have used the hot spring water from Gero in the treatments that they offer!
- The water makes one's skin velvety smooth and beautiful, which is why it is particularly popular among the ladies! Gero's is an alkaline hot spring that, with a pH of 9.2, has soap-like qualities that remove impurities and keratin from one's skin and leave it with a smooth finish. In order for this result to be achieved, however (this point will be repeated!), one should NOT shower again after getting out of the *onsen* bath!

The correct etiquette for taking a bath and tips for bringing out the full potential of Gero's water:

1. Wash your body thoroughly with soap before entering the bath. This is especially important for women in order to remove all makeup. This cannot be stressed enough, as if any amount of makeup remains, it will block the skin pores, thereby preventing the *onsen* water from doing its job.
2. Do not put the small towel you bring with you into the bath water. Instead, place it aside or atop your head.
3. After getting out of the bath, (as previously mentioned) do NOT take another shower or rinse yourself off. If you do so, the hot spring minerals will be washed away before they can act on your skin.
4. Similarly, avoid towel drying yourself off thoroughly. Instead, do so as lightly as possible in order to prevent the dissolved minerals from getting wiped off.

Notes of caution upon using hot spring baths:

- Limit yourself to three *onsen* baths per day.
- Stay immersed in a bath for no more than 10 minutes if it is very hot or 30 minutes if it is on the warm-but-not-hot side.
- Make sure to hydrate sufficiently before and/or after using the bath.



① Gero Museum of Hot Springs 下呂発温泉博物館



At this museum, one of the very few in Japan to specialize in hot springs, you can learn about them from both scientific and cultural perspectives! From the natural process by which *onsen* water spouts up from the ground to the different types of hot spring water that exist to the healing effects that they have, there is a whole lot to learn! You can also experience first-hand the benefits of hot spring water via a special "Yakushi no Ashiyu" foot-bath that consists of two tubs, one with hot spring water and one with ordinary, cold water. Just by walking through both tubs, your blood circulation will improve - one of the many health benefits of *onsen*! ❶543-2 Yunoshima, Gero City ❷9 am ~ 5

pm (Last entry: 4:30 pm) ❸¥400 (Elementary school students: ¥200, Children younger than school-age: free) ❹Thursday (Or the following business day instead when Thursday is a holiday), December 30 ~ 31

❺Gero Station → [13-minute walk] ❻0576-25-3400 ❼http://www.gero.jp/museum/ (JPN)



10% off entrance fee (Valid until March 31, 2021)



② Onsen-ji Temple 下呂温泉 温泉寺



This temple enshrines the "Medicine Buddha" that, according to legend, first guided the village people to Gero Hot Spring's source, allowing them to discover the spring water and thus reap its healing benefits. Today, Onsen-ji is located far above the Gero Hot Spring district, and from the temple gates you can look upon the entire town and its surrounding mountainous scenery. Also, there are around 80 maple trees planted on the temple grounds, and during the autumn nights from mid to late November, you can enjoy a fantastical autumn illumination and a limited-time-only foot-bath as well! ❶680 Yunoshima, Gero City ❷6 am ~ sunset ❸Gero Station → [10-minute walk] ❹0576-25-2465 ❼http://www.onsenji.jp (JPN)



Enjoying Gero's Many *Ashiyu* Foot-Baths



While it should be evident from the name alone, a foot-bath (called *ashiyu* in Japanese) is a hot spring bath meant for submerging solely one's feet. Having said this, the genius of the foot-bath is that, simply by relaxing your feet in the bath, you are able to warm your entire body! Other attractive points of the foot-bath are the ease with which you can enter it - since there is no need to take off your clothes - and the ability for anybody to use the bath together, regardless of gender. *Ashiyu* have been shown to help improve blood circulation, relieve shoulder stiffness, and provide comfort to those who are sensitive to the cold. Because of all this, though your feet are the only body parts in the *onsen*, foot-baths induce a wider relaxing effect. In all, there are ten *ashiyu* in Gero's hot spring district (refer to map for precise locations), most of which are free for anyone to use. Each has its own distinct character and flavor, so trying out a couple of them is a highly recommended way to enjoy the town! Note, however, that there are no towels available for use at any of the foot-baths, so be sure to bring one along if you intend to make use of the *ashiyu*!



"Venus no Ashiyu" Foot-Bath



"Yuamiya no Ashiyu" Foot-Bath



③ Gero Hot Spring Fireworks 下呂温泉の花火イベント



Every year in Gero, some of the most talented pyrotechnicians in the country put together stunning fireworks performances that light up the sky! Gero's specialty, it could be said, is musical fireworks, with the fireworks perfectly set to the timing of the tunes. The "Fireworks Story" performances that kick off each new year, while not musical, have particular themes that are embodied by the dazzling explosions of color in the sky, with a different theme every day.

• **Gero Hot Spring Winter "Fireworks Story"**

early January ~ March (Every Saturday): 8:30 pm ~ 8:40 pm

• **Gero Hot Spring Summer Musical Fireworks**

August 3: 8 pm ~ 8:45 pm

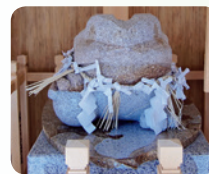
• **Gero Hot Spring Winter Musical Fireworks**

December (Every Saturday): 8 pm ~ 8:15 pm, December 24 (Special Christmas edition): 8 pm ~ 8:30 pm

❶ Along the banks of the Hida River near the Gero Ohashi Bridge, Gero City ❷ Gero Station → [3-minute walk] ❸ During inclement weather or rising water level conditions ❹ 0576-25-4711 (Gero City Tourist Information Center • English OK) ❺ http://www.city.gero.lg.jp/kankou/data/language/e/

Gero and Frogs...What's the Connection???

Just as with the egret motif mentioned previously, you will find images of frogs wherever you look in the town of Gero. However, the reason for the frog motif, unlike for the egret, is not all that profound! It's quite simple: the "ribbit" sound that a frog makes is, in Japanese, "gero!" You will even find a Kaeru ("Frog") Shrine in town filled with icons and depictions of frogs in every corner. Frog-themed souvenirs and cute frog illustrations of all kinds dot the townscape; the only things missing are real frogs themselves!



Kaeru Shrine

Frogs everywhere, including on manhole covers!





4 Gassho Village 下呂温泉 合掌村



An open-air museum that re-creates a village of thatched roof houses akin to World Heritage Site Shirakawa-go, the Gero Hot Spring Gassho Village offers a glimpse into the life-style of days long gone. The houses themselves, totaling ten, were moved from either Shirakawa-go or its companions in Gokayama (in Toyama Prefecture). Some houses display old tools and items, while others act as workshops where you can try your hand at crafts such as Japanese paper-making. But the most distinctive element of this museum is the Shirasagi-za Shadow Play Theater, where local legends are told in dynamic fashion by a theater troupe that specializes in *kage-e* shadow play. ⑨2369 Mori, Gero City ⑧3:30 am ~ 5 pm ④¥800 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥400) ②Gero Station → [Nohi Bus on the Gassho Mura Line towards "Gassho Mura" • 6 min] → "Gassho Mura" bus stop ②0576-25-2239 ④http://www.gero-gassho.jp/lg_en/



Receive lucky frog merchandise (Valid until March 31, 2021)



5 Ideyu Morning Market 下呂温泉 いでゆ朝市



Held every morning except during the winter, the Ideyu Morning Market is a great place to get some local sake, folk crafts, pickled goods, and other specialty products of Gero at good prices. It also represents a chance to interact with the locals manning the market stalls! ⑨Near the entrance to the Gassho Village ⑧3 am ~ 12 pm ④December ~ early March, During inclement weather ②0576-24-1000 (Gero Onsen Tourist Association)

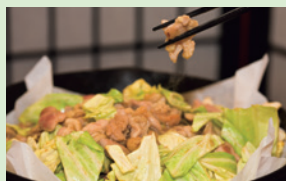


6 Nawashiro-zakura Cherry Trees 苗代桜



This famous cherry blossom location has a mystical allure that most other sakura viewing spots simply cannot match. The two sister Nawashiro-zakura Cherry Trees, both around 400 years old, are located right beside a rice paddy that, when flooded with water, produces a stunning crystal-clear reflection. Furthermore, when the trees are illuminated in the dark of night after the buds have begun to open, the sight becomes all the more captivating! The trees take their name from *nawashiro*, the Japanese word for "rice seedling nursery beds," because they bloomed right around the time when the villagers had to begin preparing those nurseries as they entered the rice-planting season. ⑨Wasa, Gero City ②Gero Station → [Taxi • 20 min] ②0576-25-4711 (Gero City Tourist Information Center • English OK) P

LOCAL SPECIALTY



keichan

keichan is a local dish of Gero Hot Springs (and other places in Gifu as well) where chicken meat is mixed with a soy-sauce or miso-based *tare* sauce and then cooked on a hotplate with cabbage and other sorts of vegetables.

In Gero Hot Springs when barbecuing at home, making *keichan* is considered standard procedure. The fascinating aspect about

keichan, however, is the fact that the taste and preparation method will vary depending on the restaurant or family that's making it, so be sure and discover a style that you like the best!

Keichan Sugi no Ko ⑨1311 Ogawa, Gero City, Gifu ⑧11 am ~ 3:30 pm ④Monday ②0576-25-7011 ④http://www.suginoko.net



7 Bosenkan 望川館



With a 3,630-square-meter Japanese garden perfect for taking a stroll and an open-air hot spring bath that holds 220 tons of water, this *ryokan* inn has many points in which it takes great pride.

⑨190-1 Yunoshima, Gero City
④1 night + 2 meals: from ¥14,040
②Gero Station → [15-minute walk]
②0576-25-2048 ④https://bosenkan.com/en/



Colored yukata rental for women (Valid until March 31, 2021)



8 Hotel KUSAKABE Armeria 下呂温泉 ホテル くさかべ アルメリア



You can get a complete view of downtown Gero City from our outdoor observation-deck baths because of the high elevation of our facility. Our hotel is equipped with great public spaces and quality services like an Aromatherapy spa, entertainment shows, and a Japanese-style bar.

⑨1811 Kodon, Gero City, Gifu ④One night with two meals from ¥20,800
②2-minute bus ride from Gero Station with our free shuttle bus
②0576-24-2020 ④info@armeria.co.jp ④https://www.armeria.co.jp/t/en/



9 Kawakamiya Kasuitei 川上屋 花水亭

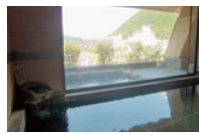


With a beautiful *sukiya-zukuri* architectural style that incorporates many features of traditional tea ceremony houses, this inn prides itself on its "pure Japanese" elegance. You can enjoy local ingredients as part of the *kaiseki* cuisine - a traditional Japanese meal served in many courses - presented in the evening.

⑨30 Yunoshima, Gero City ④1 night + 2 meals: from ¥25,000 (Tax not included) ②Gero Station → [20-minute walk] or [Free shuttle bus available]
②0576-25-5500 ④http://www.kawakamiyakasuitei.jp/ (JPN)



10 Kissenkan Chikusuitei 吉泉館 竹翠亭



At this *ryokan*, you can enjoy *kaiseki*-style meals prepared specially with vegetables grown in the inn's own garden. The view from the outdoor hot spring baths is also superb.

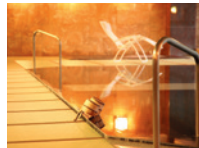
⑨1098 Kodon, Gero City
④1 night + 2 meals: from ¥14,040
②Gero Station → [5-minute walk] ②0576-25-3327
④http://www.kissenkan.com/ (JPN)



Original souvenir (Valid until March 31, 2021)



11 Ogawaya 小川屋



This Japanese-style inn is located right in the heart of the Gero Hot Spring district and overlooks the beautiful Hida River. Perhaps the most unique element of this *ryokan* is its "Tatami-buro" hot spring bath, a large one around which Japanese tatami straw mats have been laid, something you rarely, if ever, see!

⑨570 Yunoshima, Gero City ④1 night + 2 meals: from ¥16,200 (Including tax and service charge) ②Gero Station → [8-minute walk] ②0576-25-3121 ④http://www.gero-ogawaya.net/english/



10% discount at the gift shop for purchases of ¥2,000 or more (Valid until March 31, 2021)





12 Sasara 紗々羅



This hotel's wonderful Japanese-style rooms boast a fantastic view of the town of Gero and the mountains on the opposing riverside. Of the 44 rooms, a full 20 of them have their own private open-air hot spring baths attached, something that not many hotels can say!

📍1412-1 Mori, Gero City 📞1 night + 2 meals: from ¥17,280 (including tax and service charge) 📍Gero Station → [13-minute walk] ☎0576-24-1777 🌐http://www.sasara.co.jp/en/index.html



Colored yukata rental for adult women (Valid until March 31, 2021)



13 Suihoen 水風園



An inn that pours its heart and soul into the Japanese cuisine served here. Additionally, among the guest rooms, nine of them - each with its own charms and distinct atmosphere - have attached open-air *onsen* baths. 📍2519-1 Mori, Gero City 📞1 night + 2 meals: from ¥15,950 (Tax not included) 📍Gero Station → [15-minute walk] or [Courtesy car • reservation required] ☎0576-25-2288 🌐http://www.e-onsen.co.jp/reservation2.html



45 minutes' use of the "Mutsumi no Yu" private open-air hot spring bath for overnight guests (Valid until March 31, 2021)



14 Suimeikan 水明館



One of the largest *ryokan* in the entire Tokai region of Japan, Suimeikan boasts three large communal baths per gender, making it one of the ultimate accommodations for enjoying *onsen*. 📍1268 Koden, Gero City 📞1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,960 📍Gero Station → [3-minute walk] ☎0576-25-2800 🌐https://www.suimeikan.co.jp/english/



One drink in the Lobby Lounge Evian (Valid until March 31, 2021)



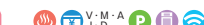
15 Yunoshimakan 湯之島館



This is an old *ryokan* built in 1931 whose main building is registered as a national Tangible Cultural Property. With a 165,000-square-meter premises, Yunoshimakan is perched in the mountains looking down upon the entirety of Gero's hot spring district. 📍645 Yunoshima, Gero City 📞1 night + 2 meals: from ¥17,400 (including tax and service charge) 📍Gero Station → [20-minute walk] or [Courtesy car] ☎0576-25-4126 🌐http://www.yunoshimakan.co.jp/english/



One tasting set per guest of three famous sake made in the Hida region (Valid until March 31, 2021)



16 Kokoro o Naderu Seijaku Miyako ころをなでる静寂 みやこ



This relaxing location tucked far away from the hustle and bustle of modern life is the perfect second home for people looking to get away. Dinner consists of delicious and creative course meals made from seasonal ingredients arranged in subtle but bold fashions. 📍2505 Mori, Gero City 📞1 night + 2 meals: from ¥21,600 (including tax and service charge) 📍Gero Station → [Courtesy car • 5 min] ☎0576-25-3181 🌐http://www.miyako21.co.jp/english/



Complimentary morning coffee (Valid until March 31, 2021)

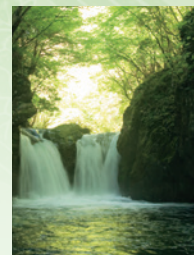


Gero Hot Spring official website

English language introductions of various inns in Gero are provided here, some of which you can make reservations for online. 🌐http://www.gero-spa.or.jp/english/index.html

Osaka Falls: One of Gifu's Greatest Gems of Nature

Located in an area slightly removed from Gero Hot Spring is Mt. Ontake, referred to sometimes as one of Japan's Three Sacred Mountains. Tucked away in the mountain's foothills in the district of Osaka-cho is Osaka Falls, an area blessed with a lush and lively natural environment. There are over 200 waterfalls here (216 over five meters in height, to be exact), making this the place with the most waterfalls in all of Japan! The majority of these were formed when Mt. Ontake erupted 54,000 years ago and its lava, flowing through the area and drastically changing the landscape, solidified into magma rock. With the passage of time, water has eroded this rock (an erosion that continues, albeit slowly, to this day!), resulting in the abundance of waterfalls. Each one has its own distinct look and refreshing feel, but aside from the waterfalls themselves, the rocks also take on very unique forms, making Osaka Falls a prime destination for basking in the wonder of Mother Nature! Selected as the very first "Gifu Brand New Treasure," Osaka Falls is well worth the trip from the center of Gero!



Mitsudaki Waterfall

📍Gero Station → [Nohi Bus on the Gero Yuya Line towards "Himeshaga no Yu" • 1 hr] → "Gandate Koen Iriguchi" bus stop → [15-minute walk] 🌐http://www.osaka-taki.com/en/index.php

Osaka Falls Courses

There are a total of 13 courses in the Osaka Falls area that take you in different directions to different waterfalls in the vast premises. The courses have varying levels of difficulty, so there is something here for everyone to enjoy, regardless of age, physical stamina, or mountain climbing experience! Split into Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced levels, the courses require differing amounts of time and are priced differently, as delineated below. Note that all Intermediate and Advanced courses require the hiring of a guide. A few Beginner courses do as well, but most of them do not require a guide and are therefore free of charge. In all cases, however, a donation of ¥200 per person, which goes towards upkeep of the area, is requested at the entrance in Gandate Park. Reservation requests and inquiries should be made to the following: NPO Hida Osaka 200 Falls Office

E-mail: hidaosaka200taki@ever.ocn.ne.jp

¥¥1,500 ~ ¥9,000, depending on the course (Children: ¥500 ~ ¥2,500)

☎0576-62-2215 🌐http://www.osaka-taki.com/en/contact/index.html

Perfect for Beginners: The "Mitsudaki Course" (3 hours required)

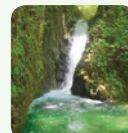
One of the easiest and most accessible options, the "Mitsudaki Course" features a total of three waterfalls, including the Mitsudaki Waterfall that entrances visitors with its gallantly cascading triad of levels. After getting off the bus, take a moment to stop at the "Ichi no Torii" Shinto gate before continuing towards Gandate Park and this popular course. Note: though not required, it is possible to apply for a guide for the "Mitsudaki Course" as well as for other Beginner level courses (the above fee will apply).



Karatani Waterfall



Gandate Gorge



Akaganetoyo Waterfall



Himeshaga no Yu: Have A Dip in the Nearby *Onsen* Before Heading Back to Town!

Right near the bus stop is a hot spring facility called "Himeshaga no Yu," perfectly situated so you can wipe away the fatigue of trekking through Osaka Falls! The *onsen* here is of a completely different kind than the water of Gero Hot Spring, and in fact, it is drinkable! Savor some food prepared with this *onsen* water in addition to soaking in the bath! 📍10 am ~ 9 pm 📞¥650 (Elementary school students: ¥300)

☒Wednesday ☎0576-62-3434



Mineral spring rice porridge

