



[GIFU]: THE ESSENTIALS 岐阜

<http://gifucvb.or.jp/en/>

GETTING HERE

- JR Nagoya Station → [JR Tokaido Main Line Rapid • 18 min • ¥470] → JR Gifu Station
 ~ Or ~
 Central Japan International Airport → [Meitetsu (Nagoya Railroad) Limited Express • 1 hr 5 min • ¥1,340] → Meitetsu Gifu Station



MAP of the Area Around Gifu Station ▶ P93 Detailed Bus Route Information:
http://www.gifucvb.or.jp/en/06_access/06_02.html

Kawara-machi District

Located right along the Nagara River in the immediate vicinity of the *ukai* boarding docks, the Kawara-machi district - whose name in fact means "riverside town" - is one of the oldest surviving areas of Gifu City. Here you find the *koshi* wooden latticed windows, which function like blinds, that you also see in the old quarters of Takayama and Hida Furukawa. Because of its vicinity to the river, Kawara-machi thrived as an important traffic center along the water transport routes, which resulted in an abundance of wholesale dealers of lumber and paper setting up shop here. Having largely escaped major damage through earthquakes and war that other parts of Gifu City sustained, much of Kawara-machi maintains its original structure and look, making it a great place to enjoy a stroll while soaking in the atmosphere of old Japan!



The capital of Gifu Prefecture, Gifu City is one with a long and proud history as the center of what was formerly Mino Province (not to be confused with Mino City!). Located in just about the geographical center of Japan, it has thus been a critical strategic hub throughout its history. Though a large city in its own right, Gifu attaches great importance to its considerable natural settings, from the sparklingly clear Nagara River that is the city's lifeblood to towering Mt. Kinka, atop which sits Gifu Castle. The sites to see in the city are fairly concentrated in location and are incredibly easy to get to by bus or taxi, making Gifu a pleasant destination to explore! The grandest spectacle that Gifu City has to offer is the 1,300-year-old tradition of cormorant fishing which, along with the city's many specialty goods such as Gifu lanterns and Japanese umbrellas, has attracted much attention from overseas.

MAIN FEATURE

1 Cormorant Fishing on the Nagara River



Gifu Prefecture prides itself on its pristine river water, and the Nagara River running through the center

of Gifu City is a prime example of this spectacular natural resource. Proof of the water's purity is the fact that *ayu* sweetfish, which can only live in extremely clean freshwaters, make it their habitat. The traditional method of catching these sweetfish, known as *ukai*, involves raising cormorant birds and training them to dive underwater to snatch up the fish from below. A thin rope is tied around each bird's soft, elastic neck so that it can catch many fish in there at once without actually swallowing them. This method has been in use in Gifu City for over 1,300 years and is a staple of the summer season, which over ten thousand travelers from around the world come to watch every year.

You can board a Viewing Boat and enjoy the scene up-close, as the fishing masters - who raise the cormorants like members of their own families - row down the Nagara River in their fishing boats with the birds in tow. Each fishing master - almost like a puppet master - manipulates about ten birds simultaneously, holding them on ropes and keeping a close eye on the proceedings. Because they know the birds so well, the masters can tell which birds are tired, and they adjust the looseness of the ropes accordingly so that the tired birds can swallow and feed on smaller fish while at the same time continuing to trap larger fish in their necks!

The climax of the event is called the *sogarami*, a formation in which the six fishing boats stagger themselves across the width of the river as they row downstream, working together to corner the *ayu* as they flee to shallower, upstream waters. This formation functions like a net, strategically eliminating any escape routes that the fish might have! The entire spectacle of *ukai*, from the torchlights in the darkness to the figure of Gifu Castle looming above, is a breathtaking experience to take in and makes you feel as if you have been sent back in time. Takes place every night between May 11th and October 15th.

1-2 Minato-machi, Gifu City (Boarding docks and Cormorant Fishing Viewing Boat Office) Viewing Boat boarding times: 6:15 pm, 6:45 pm, 7:15 pm; Cormorant fishing: 7:45 pm ~ 8:30 pm ¥3,100 ~ ¥3,400 (Children 3 years old ~ elementary school age: ¥1,700) JR Gifu Station → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop or [Taxi • 15 min] 058-262-0104 <http://www.ukai-gifucity.jp/ukai/e>

2 Nagaragawa Ukai Museum



A facility offering visitors an immersive look into the world of Gifu's famed *ukai* cormorant fishing, the Nagaragawa Ukai Museum is a must-visit destination, especially for travelers coming to Gifu during *ukai*'s off-season. With a beautiful theater introducing the traditional fishing method up-close, as well as other various interactive exhibits, it reveals the true essence of *ukai* in detail. Also on museum grounds is an observatory lounge from which guests can enjoy the breathtaking scenery of Mt. Kinka, Gifu Castle,

and the Nagara River. During the cormorant fishing off-season, cormorant fishing masters visit the museum and personally conduct demonstrations of their craft. 51-2 Nagara, Gifu City 9 am ~ 7 pm (October 16 ~ April 30: until 5 pm), Last entry: 30 min before closing Exhibition admission fee: ¥500 (Children: ¥250) Tuesday (Or the following weekday instead when Tuesday is a holiday; May 1 ~ October 15: none) JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Ukaiya" bus stop → [6-minute walk] 058-210-1555 <http://ukaimuseum.jp/> (JPN)

10% off admission fee (Children: ¥230; valid until March 31, 2021)



Detailed MAP ▶ http://www.gifucvb.or.jp/en/08_guidemap/08_01_gifu_guide_map_02.pdf



1 Gifu Castle and Mt. Kinka 岐阜城と金華山



Completed in 1201, Gifu Castle looms large over Gifu at the summit of Mt. Kinka and is a symbol of the city. During the Warring States period (mid-15th to early 17th century), the castle came under the control of great feudal warlords such as Saito Dosan and Oda Nobunaga who, with the castle as their base of operations, to a great extent determined the fate and development of the region. Nowadays, the interior of the reconstructed castle (the original of which was destroyed during wartime) is used as a display area for various historical materials, documents, weapons, and the like. The top floor, a watchtower with a ledge running around its perimeter, is a fantastic vantage point from which to look down upon the city in a 360-degree panoramic view! From the sight of the Nagara River in the foreground to the magnificent mountain ranges and the metropolis of Nagoya in the distance, the landscape from Gifu Castle is simply stunning. The view makes it very plain why the castle's builders chose this as the location for their lookout point. Finally, at various points throughout the year including most days during the summer and weekends in early autumn, the castle remains open until 9:30 pm or 10 pm, presenting visitors with an entrancing nighttime view of the area below. In order to reach the castle, you can either take a 3-minute gondola ride on the Mt. Kinka Ropeway or hike your way up the mountain via one of the ten different trails of varying steepness. **18 Kinkazan Tenshukaku, Gifu City** **8:30 am ~ 5:30 pm** (October 17 ~ March 15: 9:30 am ~ 4:30 pm, March 16 ~ May 11: 9:30 am ~ 5:30 pm) **¥4200** (Children 4 ~ 15 years old: ¥100); Ropeway fare: ¥620 one-way, ¥1,080 round-trip (Children 4 ~ 11 years old: ¥280 one-way, ¥540 round-trip) **JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations** → [Gifu Bus] → "Gifu Koen/Rekishi Hakubutsukan-mae" bus stop **058-263-4853** (Gifu Convention and Visitors Bureau) <http://www.city.gifu.jp/3537.htm>

Photo postcard (Valid until March 31, 2021)



Gifu and Oda Nobunaga

Oda Nobunaga was one of the greatest medieval warlords of Japan's Warring States period, a time of constant battle that lasted for over a century. Seeing this endless state of war around him, Nobunaga felt a strong urge to unite the lands as one and used his genius to turn this dream into reality. In Japan it was satirically said that "Nobunaga pounded the 'mochi' rice cake symbolizing the nation," Hideyoshi kneaded it, and in the end Tokugawa sat down and ate it," a quip about the three great unifiers of Japan. In this way, Nobunaga is considered to be the initiator of the unification process and perhaps the one who contributed the most to its cause. For his innovative, outside-the-box policies and strategies that were ahead of his time and that proved extremely effective in bringing the lands under one rule, Nobunaga is arguably the most revered historical figure in all of Japanese history. And the area that he deemed best suited as the base from which to unite the country was none other than modern-day Gifu City and the surrounding Mino Province in which it was located! At the crossroads of east and west Japan, Mino was a junction so militarily and economically critical that, at the time, it was said that "those who control Mino control all the lands under the heavens." Nobunaga thus captured Mino and used Gifu Castle as his stronghold as he began his quest for unification. In fact, it was Nobunaga who changed the name of the area, previously "Inokuchi," to "Gifu!" Under his rule, modern-day Gifu City flourished, especially because of his "Rakuichi-rakuza" policy that encouraged free market trade among the townspeople. Today, the citizens of Gifu City continue to honor Nobunaga and his contributions to the city, such as through the Gifu Nobunaga Festival - the city's most important autumn festival held on the first full weekend of October. Parades of samurai and other historical figures, among additional events, keep his memory very much alive! Recently, some of the Gifu Buses circuiting the city have also been redesigned as "Nobunaga Buses," bearing his image proudly!



2 Gifu Great Buddha (Shoho-ji Temple) 岐阜大仏 (正法寺)



Counted as one of Japan's Three Great Buddha Statues and designated a prefectural Important Cultural Property, the Gifu Great Buddha took 38 years to complete and boasts an extremely unique construction. The frame of the statue is constructed from bamboo and wood, which was then covered and hardened with clay and on top of that layered with Buddhist scriptures. Next, lacquer was applied to the surface many times over and, finally, the statue was gilded with golden leaves. Fascinatingly, this structure in a way represents the culture of Gifu, since bamboo and wooden crafts (the frame), pottery goods (the clay), Mino *Washi* Japanese paper (the sheets of scripture), and lacquer all were and continue to be specialty products of the region! One of the charms of the statue is that it looks down towards visitors to Shoho-ji Temple, meeting their gazes as if to comfort them. Most large Buddha statues are built with the head looking straight ahead to prevent cracks from opening in the back of the neck - something that tends to happen because of the added burden of the head facing

downwards. The Gifu Great Buddha, however, was built with light enough components that the head was tilted with no adverse effects! Finally, this 13.7-meter tall statue has survived a magnitude 8+ earthquake (as well as air-raid bombings), prompting the hypothesis that the inclusion of the scriptures, written on flexible and durable Japanese paper, in its construction has made it extra-resilient! **8 Daibutsu-cho, Gifu City** **9 am ~ 5 pm** **¥200** (Children: ¥100) **JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations** → [Gifu Bus] → "Gifu Koen/Rekishi Hakubutsukan-mae" bus stop → [2-minute walk] **058-264-2760** http://www.gifucvb.or.jp/en/01_sightseeing/01_09.html



3 Ozeki Lantern 株式会社オゼキ



Depicting flowers on lanterns made of Japanese paper or silk, traditional Gifu *Chochin* lanterns are known far and wide as some of the best in Japan. At Ozeki, these lanterns are crafted by exceptional artisans and sold in the storefront. Also available here are more modern, fusion-type light sculptures known as "Akari" conceived and created by famed artist Isamu Noguchi. These fit with Western interior decorating sensibilities as well as Eastern, so you might consider picking one up when in Gifu City! **1-18 Oguma-cho, Gifu City** **9:00 am ~ 5:00 pm** (May vary during the summer) **Weekends and holidays** **JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations** → [Gifu Bus] → "Media Cosmos Uguisudani Koko Guchi" bus stop → [5-minute walk] **058-263-0111** <http://www.ozeki-lantern.com/> **V • M • A • J • D**



4 Sumii Tomijiro Uchiwa Shop 住井富次郎商店



The Gifu *Uchiwa* fan, a well-renowned piece of craftsmanship, is made by pasting *washi* paper to a bamboo frame and covering the entire surface with lacquer or persimmon juice, giving the round fan an appealing luster. A variation on this theme is the *mizu-uchiwa* "water fan" that is made with ultra-thin paper and painted over with a naturally-derived varnish. The result is a translucent fan that is slightly more resistant to water than ordinary *uchiwa*. First used during the Meiji era (1868 ~ 1912), *mizu-uchiwa* are said to have been dipped in water before being fanned, thus their name. The theory is that heat is removed from the surrounding air as the water evaporates, making the breeze created by the fan cooler! The story surrounding its original method of use might be no more than a fanciful tale, however, since even *mizu-uchiwa* get ruined if exposed to too much water. Potential buyers are thus highly discouraged from using them with water! Even so, they are still thought to have a cooling effect, albeit a psychological one stemming from their visually refreshing translucent appearance! Pick up a regular or *water uchiwa* at this shop in Kawara-machi! **46 Minato-machi, Gifu City** **7 am ~ 9 pm** (October 16 ~ May 10: 9 am ~ 6 pm) **None** (October 16 ~ May 10: Sunday) **JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations** → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [1-minute walk] **058-264-4318** <http://www.ccn.aitai.ne.jp/~gf-uchiwa/> (JPN)



5 Tamaiya Honpo 玉井屋本舗 本店



An old Japanese confectionery that boasts more than 100 years of history, Tamaiya Honpo is the birthplace of one of Gifu's most representative sweets: the "Nobori-ayu." This confection, made from a Turkish delight-like *mochi* rice cake wrapped in castella sponge cake dough, brings to mind the image of an *ayu* sweetfish, which is its inspiration. A sweet perfect for both adults and children, it is also symbolic of Gifu City! **42 Minato-machi, Gifu City** **8 am ~ 8 pm** **Wednesday** **JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations** → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [1-minute walk] **058-262-0276** <http://www.tamaiya-honpo.com/> (JPN)

V • M • A • J • D
Only accepted for purchases ¥2,000 or more

"But I Didn't Order Any Food..."



One of the most unique elements of Gifu City (and the nearby areas) has to do with its coffee shops; many of them, especially smaller ones run by individuals or families, offer a complimentary "morning service" special in which food is served with an order of a beverage! A phenomenon completely foreign to all other areas of Japan with the exception of parts of Aichi Prefecture, this "morning service" usually consists of a combination of toast, eggs, salad, and/or fruit. Amazingly, the only thing one has to pay for is the drink itself! Limited to the hours of the morning, this service is definitely an experience travelers should seek out during their trip to Gifu City! Note that the "morning service" is not available at all coffee shops and cafés and that, for those where it is available, the exact hours, price, and food offered will vary by establishment.



6 Kawaramachiya 川原町屋



This Japanese-style café makes its home in a refurbished old house that was used as a paper wholesale shop long ago. The café is one of the multitude in Gifu that offers the "morning service" described above, and visitors can also purchase various charming Japanese trinkets and craft goods here.

☎28 Tamai-cho, Gifu City ☎9 am ~ 6:30 pm (During the cormorant fishing season: until 7 pm) May open at 10 am depending on the season ☒ New Year's holiday season ☒ JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [3-minute walk] ☎058-266-5144 ☎http://www.kawaramachiya.jp/ (JPN)



5% off the marked price for trinkets (Valid until March 31, 2021)



7 Kawaramachi Izumiya 川原町泉屋



This restaurant in the Kawara-machi district specializes in cuisine made with *ayu* and offers an array of mouth-watering set menus (ranging from ¥3,240 to ¥12,960 in price) that allow customers to savor sweetfish in a variety of forms! ☎20 Motohama-cho, Gifu City ☎11:30 am ~ 2 pm, 5 pm ~ 7:30 pm (Reservations required in the evening during *ukai*'s off-season) ☒ Wednesday, Sometimes closed in winter, No days off from July ~ August ☒ JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [5-minute walk] ☎058-263-6788 ☎http://www.nagaragawa.com/eng/index.html



One complimentary dish with an order totaling ¥3,000 or greater (Valid until March 31, 2021)



8 Gifu Grand Hotel 岐阜グランドホテル



This is a fantastic urban resort hotel conveniently located near both the Nagara River and Mt. Kinka. The view from the hotel of Gifu Castle rising above Mt. Kinka is superb.

☎648 Nagara, Gifu City
¥1 night + 2 meals: from ¥14,946 (Tax and other charges included) ☒ JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagaragawa Onsen" bus stop → [2-minute walk] ☎058-233-1111 ☎https://www.gifugrandhotel.co.jp/en/



Complimentary mineral water (Valid until March 31, 2021)



9 Gifu Miyako Hotel 岐阜都ホテル



This hotel is a relaxing place where you can soothe your body and mind. From Japanese to Chinese to Western-style and more, there are various dining options in the hotel in addition to the Sky Bar that offers an unrivaled view of Gifu City from the top floor. ☎2695-2 Nagara Fukumitsu, Gifu City ¥1 night + 2 meals: from ¥14,800 ☒ JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagaragawa Koku-sai Kaigijo-mae" bus stop → [2-minute walk] ☎058-295-3100 ☎https://www.miyakohotels.ne.jp/gifu/english/index.html/



Receive one folding fan (with an Ayu Sweetfish design) per person (Valid until March 31, 2021)



10 Hotel Park ホテルパーク



As the closest hotel of them all to Gifu Castle, Hotel Park boasts an outdoor hot spring bath on its top floor from which you can gaze upon the castle and grand Mt. Kinka.

☎397-2 Minato-machi, Gifu City ¥1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,000 (Tax not included) ☒ JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [3-minute walk] ☎058-265-5211 ☎http://www.hotelpark.jp/english/



One 500 ml bottle of mineral water per guest (Valid until March 31, 2021)



11 Ishikin 石金



A hotel located alongside the beautiful Nagara River, Ishikin offers a spectacular view of the river and Mt. Kinka as well as traditional *kaiseki* multi-course meals.

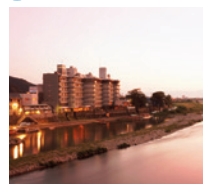
☎112 Nagara, Gifu City ¥1 night + 2 meals: from ¥11,000 (Tax not included) ☒ JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Ukai-ya" bus stop → [3-minute walk] ☎058-231-8156 ☎http://www.ishikin.co.jp/english/



Bath salts (Valid until March 31, 2021)



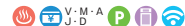
12 Juhachiro 十八楼



Recently selected as the second best *ryokan* over a century old in all of Japan, this inn has been around for more than 150 years and offers a traditionally Japanese accommodation experience. From the open-air *onsen* bath from which you can hear the sound of the flowing Nagara River to the lavish *kaiseki* banquets, Juhachiro is filled with charming elements that are sure to make your stay an extremely pleasant one. ☎10 Minato-machi, Gifu City ¥1 night + 2 meals: from ¥17,430 ☒ JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [2-minute walk] ☎058-265-1551 ☎http://www.18rou.com/en/



"Nagaragawa Bi no Yakusen" medicinal bath salts (Valid until March 31, 2021)



13 Kinka 金か



An old, storied *ryokan* featuring a luxurious, traditional Japanese restaurant, Kinka provides guests with delicious cuisine prepared using the famous products of Gifu Prefecture, from wild *ayu* sweetfish to Hida beef.

☎1-15 Omiya-cho, Gifu City ¥1 night + 2 meals: from ¥19,800 ☒ JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Gifu Koen/Rekishi Hakubutsukan-mae" bus stop → [1-minute walk] ☎058-262-2292 ☎http://www.kinkagifu.com/en/



Bath salts (Valid until March 31, 2021)



14 Usho no Ie Sugiyama 鵜匠の家 すぎ山



During the season in which it is carried out, you can watch the spectacle of *ukai* cormorant fishing unfolding from the comfort of your room at Usho no Ie Sugiyama! Meals here include *kaiseki*-style dining featuring seasonal ingredients and specialty products of Gifu Prefecture. ☎73-1 Nagara, Gifu City ¥1 night + 2 meals: from ¥15,120 ☒ JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Ukaiya" bus stop → [5-minute walk] ☎058-231-0161 ☎http://www.gifu-sugiyama.com/ (JPN)



One coffee voucher per guest redeemable in the lobby lounge (Valid until March 31, 2021)

