GETTING HERE

~ Or ~
JR Gifu Station → [JR Takayama Main Line * 35 min] → Mino-Ota Station → [Nagaragawa Railway * 17 min * ¥960 in total] → Hamono Kaikan-mae Station

MAIN FEATURE

Seki, the Sword Capital of Japan

For over 700 years, production of Japanese swords has prospered in Seki, placing the city at the heart of the culture and history of one of the most widely recognized symbols of Japan. The Japanese sword, an object as beautiful as it was deadly, is said to have appeared in Seki with the arrival of Motoshige, a legendary master swordsmith who moved to Seki after dreaming it a worthy place to further his work.

Later during the Warring States period (mid-15th to the beginning of the 17th), the katana (“swords”) of Seki were highly praised and favored by many of the military commanders of the time. It was said the swords were “unbreakable, unbreakable, and extremely sharp.” and it was during this era that the name of “Seki” echoed to all corners of the land. The one credited with devising the technique used to make these highly regarded swords was the legendary swordsmith Kanemoto Magoroku, known far and wide - even to this day - as “Seki no Magoroku” (“Magoroku of Seki”), a name that also identifies the swords that he made.

His shiho-zume method of forging the blade, adopted by those around him, elevated the swords of Seki to even greater heights. Even after a new era dawned on Japan in which the use of swords was no longer permitted, Seki’s focus on blade-making remained.

To this day, swords continue to be forged here by the sweat and hard work of many of Japan’s greatest swordsmiths, as works of art and nothing more. Every year, the people of Seki pay tribute to this history of excellence during the Seki Cutlery Festival, held the weekend before the national Health and Sports Day (the second Monday of October). During this event, you can watch sword-forging and blade-polishing demonstrations, marvel at cutting and sheathing performances, and look through Japanese sword exhibits, making it an event worthy of the name “Seki.”

For inquiries about the Cutlery Festival: 0575-23-7704 (Tourism and Cultural Exchange Section, Seki City)

SPOTLIGHT

The Blades of Seki in Our Everyday Lives

One might think that, even though traditional Japanese swords are still being forged in Seki, the wisdom accumulated over these last 700 years is largely going to waste, as swords are no longer in popular demand. However, this could not be further from the truth! The people of Seki have applied their unrivaled knowledge of making high-quality blades - best embodied by the “Seki no Magoroku” swords - to the production of instruments that meet the demands of the modern-day world. Items such as cutlery, scissors, and razors made with a special Seki flair in the town’s factories are shipped to all corners of the world, making “Seki” a name as respected as any other in the industry! You can get your hands on some of these top-quality goods at unbelievable prices at the Cutlery Festival (see above)!

Located at a strategic junction between east and west Japan, Seki City blossomed as many travelers passed through the town, making their way to and from the old capital of Kyoto and Hida Province. It is said that the name “Seki” comes from sekisho, the Japanese word for “barrier” or “checkpoint,” since one was established in the city along this travel route. Seki has also thrived as Japan’s greatest production center of blades since the Kamakura period (1185 - 1333), with countless excellent swordsmiths emerging from the area. Along with Germany’s Solingen and England’s Sheffield, Seki is considered one of the three great blade capitals of the world. Seki City’s many other points of interest include its famous unagi fresh water eel and Oze Ukai, brother to the Cormorant fishing tradition that takes place in Gifu City. Finally, an interesting tidbit: Seki is the exact geographic center of Japan and is also the center of the population, which is a theoretical point at which the country is balanced between north and south, east and west (assuming that each person has the same weight)!
**Seki City and Its Mouth-Watering Unagi**

Seki is renowned across Japan for its freshwater eel, and it is no coincidence that both sword production and eel consumption have been part of the town's history and culture for ages. Indeed, the two are closely tied, originally stemming from the needs of the swordsmith masters. It need not be said that swordmaking is a difficult undertaking; forging a blade necessitates sitting beside a blazing furnace for long periods of time as well as hammering away with heavy tools in order to mold the steel. Thus, as swordsmiths started to migrate to Seki in the Kamakura period, they needed a reliable, local source of stamina to replenish their energy reserves. Rich in vitamins, unagi has been consumed for its nutritional value throughout Japanese history, and to this day it is considered the best food to eat during Japan’s hot, draining summer months. Unagi was therefore the food of choice for Seki’s swordsmiths, and what’s more, they also saw it as an ideal dish to serve to customers and potential buyers! With this long history, the chefs of Seki have perfected unagi cuisine, and they continue to use the secret grilling techniques and sauce recipes that have been handed down here for generations!

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**Cutler Sanshu / Seki Hamono Museum**

The Seki Hamono Museum at Cutler Sanshu is a museum that introduces the manufacturing process of Japanese swords, kitchen knives, and nail clippers that are made in Seki. The facility is equipped with a forge for crafting Japanese swords where one can view - or even experience hands on - traditional Japanese sword-smithing for an added cost (reservation required). In the store you can find our in-house “Seki Yoshihide” brand kitchen knives and scissors, as well as cutlery from a wide range of local manufacturers, available for direct purchase.

**Small gift (No expiration date)**

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**Teraogahara Senbon-zakura Park**

Stretching for two kilometers from the Terao Pass is a long, graceful row of 2,000 sakura cherry trees that turn the area into a springtime paradise from early to mid-April. The view of the cherry blossoms, which you can enjoy from the comfort of a number of tea houses located along the road, is truly a sight to behold.

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**Kakumaru**

An unagi specialty restaurant, Kakumaru only uses the best eel in its dishes: large, thick specimens with plenty of meat! This shop, located right across from the Cutlery Hall, takes great pride in the chewy texture of its grilled eel.

**¥100 off an order of regular unagi-don eel over rice (Valid until March 31, 2021)**

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**Sugishima**

With a total of six hot spring baths - including open-air and private ones - and exceptional meals featuring river fish and edible wild vegetation eaten around an iroitori hearth, this Japanese-style inn promises a wonderful lodging experience. 4538 Itadori, Seki City 1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,960 sekai-kanmoe-mae Station → [Nagarakawa Railway towards Mino-shi, Mino Shirotori, or Hokuanno Station] → Seki Station → [Taxi: 10 min] 0120-753-277 [http://www.sugishima.com](http://www.sugishima.com (JPN))

**“Koka no Shinsui” mineral water (Valid until March 31, 2021)**