



# [MINOKAMO]: THE ESSENTIALS 美濃加茂

[http://minokamo-kanko.jp/\(JPN\)](http://minokamo-kanko.jp/(JPN))

## GETTING HERE

JR Gifu Station → [JR Takayama Main Line • 35 min • ¥500] → Mino-Ota Station

## MAIN FEATURE

### A Place Outside of Time: Ota-juku on the Nakasendo

During the Edo period of Japanese history (1603 ~ 1868), there were five great routes, or highways, that spread throughout the heart of the land. One of these, which ran through central Japan and connected the cities of Edo and Kyoto, was the Nakasendo. Though much of this route has now been replaced by modern motorways, it has been preserved in near-original form in certain locations. One of these precious locations is Ota-juku, the 51st post town of the 69 along the route (in the Edo → Kyoto direction) where many a weary traveler rested for a night before continuing his long journey. In fact, it was located right before one of the three most difficult stretches along the road, and so in order to rest up for this challenge, greater numbers of travelers stayed overnight at the inns in town than likely would have otherwise! This, along with the fact that one of the Owari Domain's regional magistrate's offices was established here, illustrates why Ota-juku came to be such a cultural, economic, and political hub of the region.

It is a fantastic area in which to take a stroll, all while soaking in the old atmosphere exuding from the buildings. Among the notable points of interest here is the Ota-juku Official Subsidiary Inn - a national Important Cultural Property - that has maintained its original form. While the main Official Inn lodged feudal lords, direct retainers of the shogun, relatives of the Imperial family, and important figures in the military government, this Official Subsidiary Inn housed the lower attendants that joined them along their journeys. All that remains of the main inn, sadly, is one of its gates; that said, this one gate alone possesses substantial historical value and is a designated Tangible Cultural Property of Minokamo!



## SPOTLIGHT

### 1 Gifu Seiryu-Satoyama Park

This facility is a re-creation of a traditional, idyllic Japanese countryside town as it was in the previous era, called Showa (1926 ~ 1989). Paying tribute to the architecture, customs, and forms of entertainment that characterized that era, the Showa Village brings you back to the 1950s and 60s and has turned into a popular site for tourists. Its wooden school buildings and expansive grassy fields imagine a Japan that is very different from what you will see today. The village is a place where both adults and children can enjoy a relaxing time, and there are various hands-on activities throughout the park that allow you to make something - from pottery to soba noodles to traditional Japanese wind chimes - and then take whatever you've made home with you as a souvenir (unless you've eaten it, of course)! It adjoins the "Nihon Showa Mura" Roadside Station, for those intending to travel via rental car! ♪ 2292-1 Yamanoue-cho, Minokamo City ♪ March ~ November: 9 am ~ 6 pm, January ~ February: 10 am ~ 5 pm, Bathhouse: 10 am ~ 10 pm ✕ March ~ November: none, December ~ February: Wednesdays ♪ Free admission ♪ Mino-Ota Station → [Minokamo Ai'ai Bus on the Bunka no Mori/Koen Line • 11 ~ 17min] → "Gifu Seiryu-Satoyama Park" bus stop ♪ Parking: 3,000 normal parking spaces and 50 large-sized spaces ♪ Child Services: 10 baby strollers, 11 wheelchairs, and 4 baby feeding rooms (no facilities for boiling water)



Facing the grand mountains of central Gifu Prefecture to the north and the Nobi Plain and majestic Kiso River to the south, the city of Minokamo is one with a bountiful natural environment. And with a milder climate than most other parts of Gifu, it is blessed with the perfect fertile terrain for fruit cultivation. In particular, persimmons and Japanese pears are widely grown and are popular throughout the region. Minokamo also has more and more industrial complexes cropping up every day and is a lively economic center. Deviating from this more modern image, however, Minokamo is home to Ota-juku, a historical post town with many inns located on the Nakasendo, which was one of the Five Routes of the Edo period through which most traffic passed. Ota-juku thus thrived as a transportation hub, and it maintains much of its old-world charm today. The Nakasendo Festival held in the spring is a tribute to this rich history and sees many visitors who make their way to step back in time!

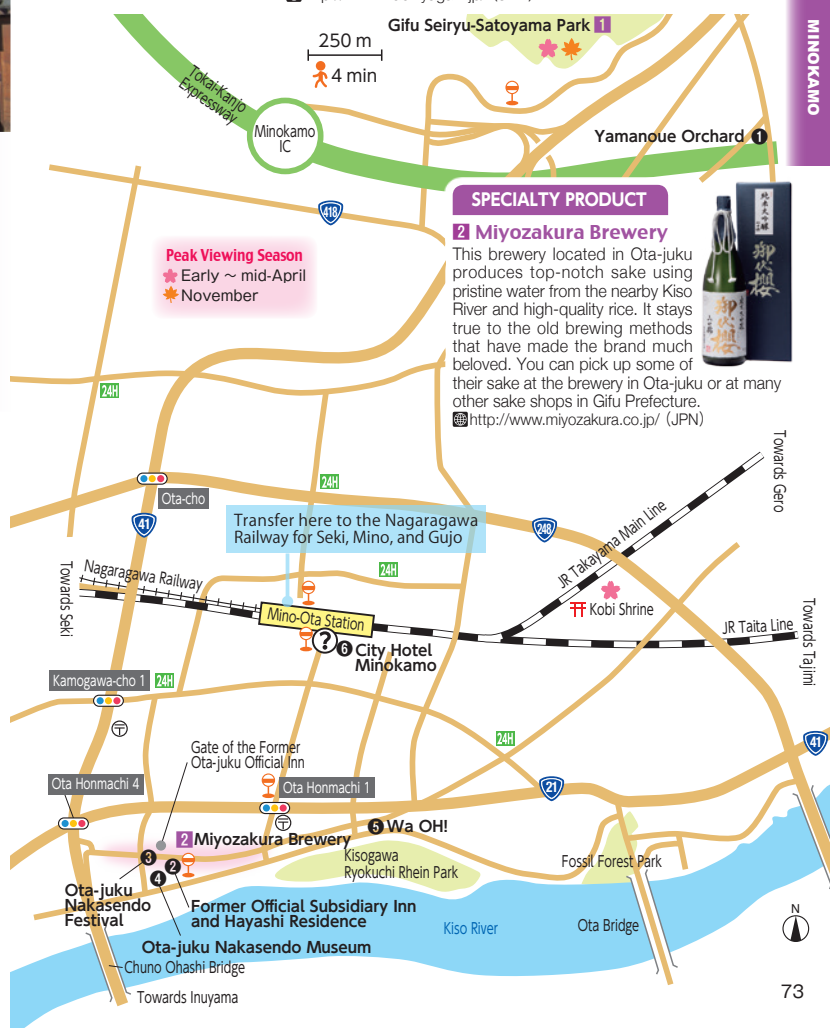
## LOCAL SPECIALTY



### "Dojo Hachiya" Persimmons

Native to the town of Hachiya, these persimmons, or *kaki*, are very highly renowned. When dried, they become sweet instead of astringent (as they are when fresh), and their quality is such that they used to be presented to the Imperial court (*dojo* refers to court nobles) long ago in the Heian period (794 ~ 1185) and then again throughout the Edo period. During the latter age, the town of Hachiya was even granted privileges such as decreased land taxes in exchange for these offerings! The "Dojo" in the name distinguishes these persimmons from others produced elsewhere, maintaining the status of Hachiya's persimmons as being a step above the rest. Somewhat more recently, these persimmons won a silver award at the World's Fair in Paris in 1900!

♪ <http://www.hachiyaagi.jp/> (JPN)



MINOKAMO

# [MINOKAMO] 美濃加茂



## 1 Yamanoue Orchard 山之上観光果樹園



The Yamanoue area of Minokamo City is located on elevated land and is blessed with plenty of sunshine throughout the year; during the winter, it is rare that even a little whiff of frost forms on the vegetation. These factors taken together make Yamanoue an ideal place to grow fruit, and Japanese pears and persimmons are among the town's foremost produce. It boasts the largest yield of pears, in particular, in the entire prefecture. At Yamanoue Orchard, you can enjoy picking pears and eating as many of them as you would like! Do so while looking out onto the Hida and Kiso rivers, two of Gifu's best. Grown with limited use of pesticides, the pears here are wondrously sweet and juicy when picked right off the trees; you may never want to eat pears from anywhere else ever again! Finally, fresh pears and persimmons are also sold separately at the orchard for those who want to take some home. ① 1093-78 Yamanoue-cho, Minokamo City ② 9 am ~ 5 pm (Last entry: 3 pm) ③ Pear picking (August 16 ~ early October): ¥1,000 (Elementary school students: ¥800, Children younger than elementary school age but over 2 years old: ¥600) ④ Mino-Ota Station → [JR Takayama Main Line towards Takayama・4 min] → Kobi Station → [20-minute walk] ⑤ 0574-25-4101 (Yamanoue Agricultural Cooperative Association) P

## The Nakasendo: One of the Edo Five Routes

At the start of the Edo period, five great highways were constructed, connecting Nihonbashi - in the capital city of Edo (modern-day Tokyo) - with other parts of newly centralized Japan. Having just emerged from the tenuous Warring States period, Japan was enjoying its first years of unity. The Five Routes project was initiated by one of the three great unifiers of Japan, Tokugawa Ieyasu, who ushered in this new period of peace. He intended to use these highways as a means to maintain political control and to tighten his power grip on the country. Among the five, two highways directly linked Edo and the old capital of Kyoto: the Tokaido and the Nakasendo. While the former ran along the Pacific coastline, the latter (the longest of the five) ran through the inland mountainous parts of Japan's main island of Honshu (thus its name meaning "central mountain route"), and therefore through what is today Gifu Prefecture. Although the Nakasendo did not see as much traffic as the Tokaido, it was preferred by many because it did not require fording any rivers or parts of the sea and was less dangerous overall with fewer bandits. Indeed, the Nakasendo was often the chosen route when Imperial princesses were married off to noble houses and to join their new husbands, leading to its status as a "princess route." Along the highway sprung up many post towns highly concentrated with inns and with men and horses for hire who would carry luggage to another post town. 69 such towns were established, 17 of which are in modern-day Gifu. Many, such as Ota-juku and Magome-juku, have been extremely well-preserved, making them popular destinations among tourists.

Nihonbashi Bridge (Edo)

Tsumago-juku

Magome-juku ▶ P78

Oi-juku ▶ P84

Ota-juku

Sanjo Ohashi Bridge (Kyoto)



旧太田藩本陣林家住宅

## 2 Former Official Subsidiary Inn and Hayashi Residence



Built in 1769, this treasure of a house was used as the designated Official Subsidiary Inn of Ota-juku during the Edo period, providing accommodations for the various noble attendants who traveled with their lords and masters. It was also the home of the Hayashi family, whose head of household alternated holding the position of village chief with the owner of the main Official Inn. Including the inn's doors and windows, much of its construction is exactly as it was hundreds of years ago. Visitors can tour the inside at no cost. ① 3-3-34 Ota Honmachi, Minokamo City ② 9 am ~ 4 pm ③ Monday (Or the following business day instead when Monday is a holiday), New Year's holiday season ④ Mino-Ota Station → [15-minute walk] ⑤ 0574-25-2111 (Industrial Promotions Division, Minokamo City) ⑥ http://minokamo-kanko.jp/ P



## 3 Ota-juku Nakasendo Festival 太田宿中山道まつり



Re-enacting the many processions of Imperial princesses along the great highway as they departed home to join the houses of their newly betrothed husbands, the Ota-juku Nakasendo Festival is a delightful event with many attractions. Over 100 citizens dressed up as samurai and footmen attend five historical princesses wearing brilliantly colored garments as they parade their way around the old post town. Rifle squads, matchlock firing demonstrations, a bazaar, and various hands-on activities for children comprise the rest of this fun-filled event held on the 3rd Sunday in October. ① Ota Honmachi, Minokamo City ② Mino-Ota Station → [15-minute walk] ③ 0574-25-2111 (Industrial Promotions Division, Minokamo City) ④ http://www.onsai-minokamo.com (JPN) P



## 4 Ota-juku Nakasendo Museum 太田宿中山道会館



This free admission museum focuses on the history and culture of Ota-juku as well as of the Nakasendo more generally. Exhibition rooms inform visitors what post towns were actually like back in the Edo period and what a journey along the Nakasendo entailed at the time. There are also a dining area and a display/sales corner for local products located here, making it the perfect resting spot during one's stroll through Ota-juku. ① 3-3-31 Ota Honmachi, Minokamo City ② 9 am ~ 5 pm ③ Monday (Or the following business day instead when Monday is a holiday), New Year's holiday season ④ Mino-Ota Station → [20-minute walk] ⑤ 0574-23-2200 ⑥ http://kaikan.ootajuku.net (JPN) P



Mini-poster made from *washi* Japanese paper or picture postcard depicting Ota-juku (Until supplies last)



## 5 Wa OH! 和OH!



Based in the post town of Ota-juku on the Nakasendo, Wa OH! offers rickshaw tours of the area and a variety of Japanese cultural activities. Hop on a rickshaw and an English-speaking guide will take you on a leisurely tour of the post town, explaining its history and showing you the sights. They also provide activities for many ancient Japanese traditions, such as court music, soba-making, calligraphy, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, meditation, taiko drumming, and more. For more information or to make reservations, the Wa OH! office can be contacted directly (E-mail: rumurakami@yahoo.co.jp) ① 2742 Shimo-kobi, Kobi-cho, Minokamo City ② 10 am ~ 4 pm ③ Mino-Ota Station → [15-minute walk] ④ 0574-50-2428 P



Handmade *tsuko tegata* passport (Valid until March 31, 2021)



## 6 City Hotel Minokamo シティホテル美濃加茂



Situated in the immediate vicinity of Mino-Ota Station, this hotel is in a prime location, perfect for a trip in Gifu Prefecture's Chuno region. With a tranquil and pleasant atmosphere, the City Hotel Minokamo is well reputed for providing a hearty breakfast and a dinner with varied sumptuous choices. ① 2565-1 Ota-cho, Minokamo City ② 1 night + 2 meals: from ¥9,720 ③ Nearby Mino-Ota Station ④ 0574-27-1122 ⑤ http://www.cityhotel-minokamo.jp/ P



Complimentary mineral water and 10% off the standard room rate (Reservation required in advance; Discount cannot be combined with any others) (Valid until March 31, 2021)