

## Kinki Long-Distance Nature Trail - Mt. Taishi hiking course

Start at JR Kinosaki Onsen Station and head out to the surrounding mountains; the course ends at the Michelin Green Guide One Star panoramic view. Along the way is Hyogo Prefecture's local memorial "Tree of Unity" and 88 enshrined stone buddha (ojizo-bodhisattva statues who look over children, travellers and the underworld). Because the majority of the course is unpaved dirt road, it's necessary to have sturdy shoes and clothes/equipment that is easy to move in, although the course does not have severe hills. However, caution is required during rainy and snowy weather.

There are no restrooms or shops on the mountain trail so please plan accordingly. It's also recommended to bring a bell or something that makes a loud noise to repel bears. You can take the ropeway back down the mountain.

1 The starting point for this route that's designated as a Kinki Long-Distance Nature Trail, is "JR Kinosaki Onsen Station". In town there are several monuments to literary figures with an affinity to the town. In front of the station is one to literary figure Shimazaki Toson. Look for these monuments on your way to the mountain trail.

2 The street in front of the station has a wide variety of souvenir shops, fresh fish markets, and other shops. While enjoying the various shops you will see a small super market on your left. Turn left here and walk along this road till you come to "Kinosaki Literature Museum", which is at the entrance of the mountain trail. Those

who have not brought drinks or snacks should prepare these now before entering the trail.

3 Inside "Kinosaki Literary Museum", which is near the center of town, you'll find information on the various literarians and historical figures who have ties to Kinosaki Onsen. In front of the building is an engraved monument to Naoya Shiga, who wrote "Kinosaki ni te (At Cape Kinosaki)". You can also get information on the trail from the tourist association located inside. Facing away from the museum, turn to the left, walk along the building, you'll see a set of stairs that will lead to the mountain trail. There are some stone buddhas located along the stairs that are part of the 88 enshrined along the trail.

4 Travel along the stairway from the Kinosaki Literary Museum for about 200m you'll see Atago Shrine. It's a shrine with a spirit of fire prevention and protection and is a nice place to visit and maybe ask for protection if you wish. In good weather you can see the harbor bridge over the magnificent Maruyama River.

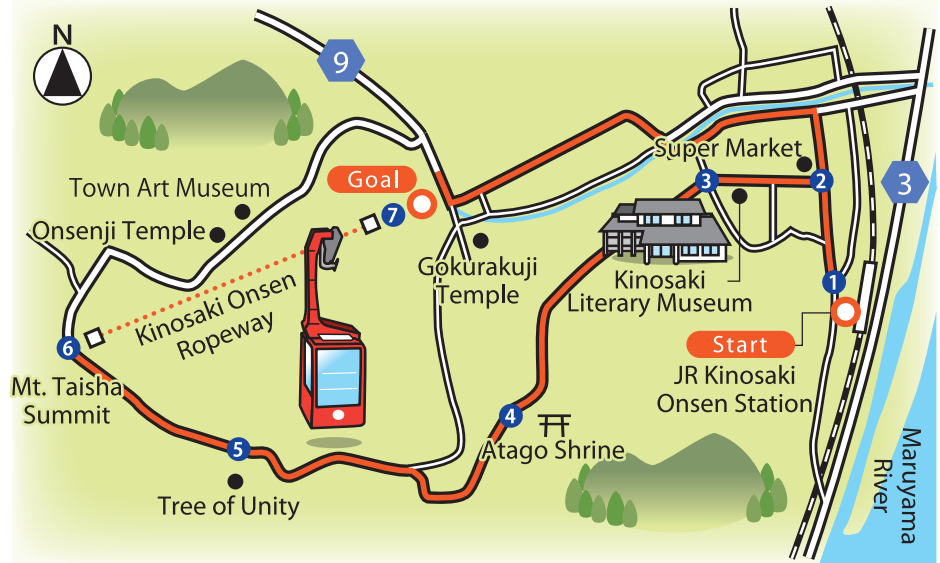
While you're at the shrine, be sure to check the signpost next to it for the next destination, "Tree of Unity(和合の樹)". From here you will continue on a pleasant ridge trail. Because the trail is a little wider and easier to walk here, it is a good chance to visit the stone Buddha and enjoy the scenery as you continue along the trail.

5 It's about a 60 minute walk from Atago Shrine to the "Tree of Unity (和合の樹)". This combined tree was designated as a Hyogo Prefecture local monument in 1984 and is a symbol of the area. It's a rare site of a red pine and a cod roe growing together like a single tree from the root. There is a wooden walk board around the tree. Be careful, as it can be slippery when wet. The goal point, Mt. Taishi's summit, is just a little further.

6 Walk about 6 minutes past the Tree of Unity and you'll see a playground located at the summit of Mt. Taishi. Walk through here to the summit station of Kinosaki Onsen Ropeway. Go up the stairs next to the entrance to the observation deck. Here you can enjoy a magnificent view overlooking the town of Kinosaki Onsen, which won 1 star with the Michelin Green Guide. On clear days you can see out over the Sea of Japan. There's also a cafe at the summit station where you rest. On the north side of the station there is an engraved monument of Yoshida Kenko (Kenko Hoshi).

Take the ropeway down from the summit. Time allowing, you can get off at the midway station, a rare ropeway feature in Japan. At the midway station there's Onsenji Temple, opened by the founder of Kinosaki Onsen, Douchi Shonin. There is also the temple's main deity, the eleven-faced bodhisattva. These are designated as a nationally important cultural asset. You can purchase tickets to the midway station or all the way down to the station at the bottom of the mountain. There is a walking path you can take from the temple to the bottom of the mountain as well.

7 After you reach the bottom of the mountain there is a footbath nearby for you to soak your tired feet. Before returning to JR Kinosaki Station be sure to check out some of the 7 public hot spring bathhouses located in town. Kiyamachi Street is also a nice walking path where you can enjoy the cherry blossoms in the spring and see fireflies in the summer.



- **Difficulty** : ★★★☆
- **Start point** : JR Kinosaki Onsen Station, Kinosaki Onsen Ropeway Summit Station
- **Access** : Get off at JR Kinosaki Onsen Station
- **Parking** : City parking lots in front of the station, in Kiya Machi, by Kouno-Yu bathhouse
- **Contact** : Kinosaki Onsen Tourism Association  
TEL : 0796-32-3663

Approx. Distance

**10** km