



Japan National
Tourism Organization
日本政府観光局



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KISO VALLEY

In collaboration with
Tourist Information Centers in the area



Old Post Towns of Tsumago, Magome and Narai

Kiso Valley (木曾谷), or “Kiso-ji” as it is often called by the Japanese, is in the southwestern part of Nagano, the most mountainous prefecture located in central Japan. Surrounded by mountains such as the Central Alps to the east and the North Alps to the west, the deep valley formed by the Kiso River is filled with the refreshing fragrance of woodland trees. The old Nakasendo Highway, which was completed in the Edo Period (1603–1867) as a trunk road connecting Kyoto and present day Tokyo, went through the region, the most difficult section for travelers because of the deep forests and steep slopes. In those days it took three days to pass through the valley, where today, National Road Route 19 and the JR Chuo Line enable one to take the trip in a few hours. Vestiges of the old highway are

well preserved in the Kiso Valley. Among the 11 post towns situated along the road, Tsumago, Magome and Narai are the most protected and worth visiting. There you will be surprised to discover that the old days of Japan still exist. “Fuzoku Emaki Parade,” the most famous event in the region, takes place in Tsumago on November 23 every year. Local folks, dressed in various costumes of the Edo Period travelers, form a procession along the old highway.

Kiso-Fukushima (木曾福島), now the political and cultural center of the district, has valuable relics and museums, although the town as a whole doesn’t retain much of the olden day atmosphere.

Access to Tsumago & Magome:

From	To	By	Approx. Travel Time	Price
Shinjuku Sta.	Shiojiri Sta.	JR Limited Express “Azusa”	2 hrs. 25 min.	¥6,620*
Shiojiri Sta.	Nakatsugawa Sta.	JR Limited Express “Shinano”	1 hr. 5 min.	¥3,420*
Nagoya	Nakatsugawa Sta.	JR Limited Express “Shinano”	50 min.	¥3,070*
Gero Sta.	Nakatsugawa Sta.	[1] Nohi Bus to Kashimo (transfer) [2] Kita-ena Bus to Nakatsugawa Sta.	1 hr. 50 min. (3 services/day)	[1] ¥1,080 [2] ¥1,370
Nakatsugawa Sta.	Magome	Kita-ena Bus	25 min.	¥570
	Nagiso	JR Chuo Line (Local)	20 min.	¥330
Magome	Tsumago	Ontake Kotsu Bus	25 min.	¥600
Nagiso Sta.		Ontake Kotsu Bus	10 min.	¥300

*Fare + express charge (with seat reservation, normal season)

Note: Direct bus service is available between Takayama Bus Center / Gero Sta. and Magome & Tsumago area in warmer seasons.

Please visit <https://www.nouhibus.co.jp/> for updates.

Magome (馬籠)

Commanding a view of Mt. Ena, this is the southernmost post town, noted as the birthplace of Japan’s great man of letters, Toson Shimazaki (1872–1943). Shops and inns using traditional houses are lined along a 600-m curving slope. A 20-min. stroll through the town.

Toson Memorial Museum (藤村記念館)

10 min. walk from Magome bus stop. Halfway up the slope, this hall exhibits books, photos and other materials regarding the author. The hall is built on the site where Toson’s home, Magome Honjin (an officially appointed inn for feudal lords), was located. Admission: ¥500. Open: 9:00–17:00 (Apr.–Nov.), 9:00–16:00 (Dec.–Mar.). Closed: Wed. (Dec.–Feb.)

Toson and his family rest in the peaceful precinct of **Eishoji Temple** (永昌寺), off the main street, on a small hill.

Tsumago (妻籠)

The second post town from the south. After the construction of the Chuo line and the national road in the early 1900s, Tsumago gradually lost its role as a relay station and was left behind in the massive development of the whole nation. Faced

with a serious problem of depopulation, people of Tsumago found a way out by making good use of the old deserted village in the late 1960s, when the movement of preserving and restoring historical structures took place. In 1976, Tsumago was designated as an Important Preservation District by the government. The preservation of Tsumago is supported by the efforts of the townspeople as well as by the charter, whose principles state that no part of the town should be sold, hired out or destroyed.

Now the landscape is perfectly that of the Edo Period, where even TV antennas or electric light poles are out of sight. Spending a night at one of these traditional style inns along the main street will become a memorial high light on the itinerary of your journey.

In the middle of the main road, **Wakihonjin Okuya** (脇本陣奥谷), an officially appointed inn, whose designation is next to Honjin, is a three-storied structure all made of Japanese cypress. The present building was reconstructed in 1877 and it is now open to the public to show its elaborate details. Behind the house stands a history museum. Admission: ¥600. Open: 9:00–17:00. (Enter by 16:45) Closed: Dec. 29–Jan. 1.

*See p. 4 for admission and opening times.

Nagiso Town Museum (南木曾町博物館)

This museum incorporates the Tsumagojuku honjin (Tsumago Inn), Wakihonjin Okuya and history museum. General admission for the three facilities: ¥700. Open: 9:00–17:00. Closed: Dec.29-Jan. 1

Hiking from Magome to Tsumago

The path between Magome and Tsumago is an ideal route to walk in Kiso. The 3-hr. walk can be most enjoyable during the seasons of fresh verdure and autumnal tints. In winter (Jan. & Feb.), snow is about half a meter deep, and hiking boots are required. Luggage carrying service is available daily during Mar. 20–Nov. 30. Luggage is accepted at both Tourist Information Offices in Magome and Tsumago from 8:30 to 11:30 and arrives at 13:00. ¥1,000 per piece. There is a map on page 4/4.

Nezame-no-toko (寢覚の床)

This is a unique beauty spot where granite that has encroached into the Kiso river has taken a variety of shapes, and the formations have been given names that describe their shape, like Byobuiwa (rock of folding screen), Zoiwa (rock of elephant) and Eboshiwa (rock of court noble's headgear).

Torii Pass (鳥居峠)

With an altitude of 1,197m, Torii Pass was an important milestone on the Nakasendo. The pass can be enjoyed on a pleasurable 3 hr. trek between JR Narai Sta. and Yabuhara Sta. Wonderful scenery and the atmosphere of old Japan await you on this approximately 6 km. route. Near the top you'll find the Ontake shrine, where you can enjoy the distant view of Mt. Ontake, and an observation deck in Maruyama park.

Narai (奈良井)

Once called "Narai of a Thousand Houses," it was the most prosperous post town in the valley. Designated as an Important Preservation District for groups of traditional buildings by the government, the town preserves the atmosphere of an old post town as well as Tsumago. Along the 1-km long main street, there are five wells which are still in use from the Edo period and appease the thirst of travelers. Folkcrafts such as **Nurigushi** (lacquered combs) and **Magemono** (round containers made of cypress) are famous items from this town.

Kiso-no-Ohashi (木曾の大橋), or Kiso's Big Bridge, is made of Japanese cypress that is about 300 years. This beautifully curved bridge is one of the biggest pier-less bridges in Japan. The bridge arches over the Narai river.

Kiso-Hirasawa (木曾平沢)

One station north of Narai, is noted for lacquer wares.

Kiso Lacquerware Museum (木曾漆器館), displaying works of ancient to modern times, is 10 min. on foot from the station. Admission: ¥300. Open: 9:00–17:00 (–16:00 Dec.–Mar.). Closed: Mon. (or the following day after the holiday when Mon. falls on a national holiday) & Dec. 29–Jan. 3.

Yabuhara (藪原)

The station, one station south of Narai, is known for wooden combs called Orokugushi. The process of making combs by hand can be observed at several workshops left in the town.

Accommodations:

Name of Facilities	Tel.	Room rate (¥)	Name of Facilities	Tel.	Room rate (¥)
Magome			Narai		
Ryokan Iwatake (R)	(0573)69-2201	¥¥	Aoki (M)	(0264)34-3781	¥
Magomechaya (M)	(0573)69-2038	¥	Iseya (M)	(0264)34-3051	¥¥
Tajimaya (M)	(0573)69-2048	¥	Echigoya (R)	(0264)34-3011	¥¥¥
Kisoji Furusato Youth Hostel (Y)	(0573)69-5128	¥	Kato (M)	(0264)34-2625	¥¥
Tsumago			Shimada (M)	(0264)34-2678	¥
Sakamotoya (M)	(0264)57-3111	¥	Tsuchikawa (M)	(0264)34-3224	¥
Shimosagaya (M)	(0264)57-3124	¥	Ikariya (M)	(0264)34-3202	¥¥
Maruya (M)	(0264)57-3117	¥	Kiso-Fukushima		
Tsutamura (M)	(0264)57-3235	¥	Onyado Tsutaya (R)	(0264)22-2010	¥¥
Kameyama (M)	(0264)57-3187	¥	Iwaya (R)	(0264)22-2015	¥¥¥
Koshinzuka (M)	(0264)57-3029	¥	Yamamizuki Urara Tsutaya (R)	(0264)22-2145	¥¥¥
			Komanoyu (R)	(0264)23-2288	¥¥
			Sarashinaya (R)	(0264)22-2307	¥
			Moritomi Ryokan (R)	(0264)22-2303	¥¥
			Murachiya (R)	(0264)22-3186	¥
			Nezame Hotel (PL)	(0264)52-2245	¥

Remarks:

Rate per person.

M = Minshuku (family-run inn)

R = Ryokan

PL = People's Lodge

Y = Youth Hostel

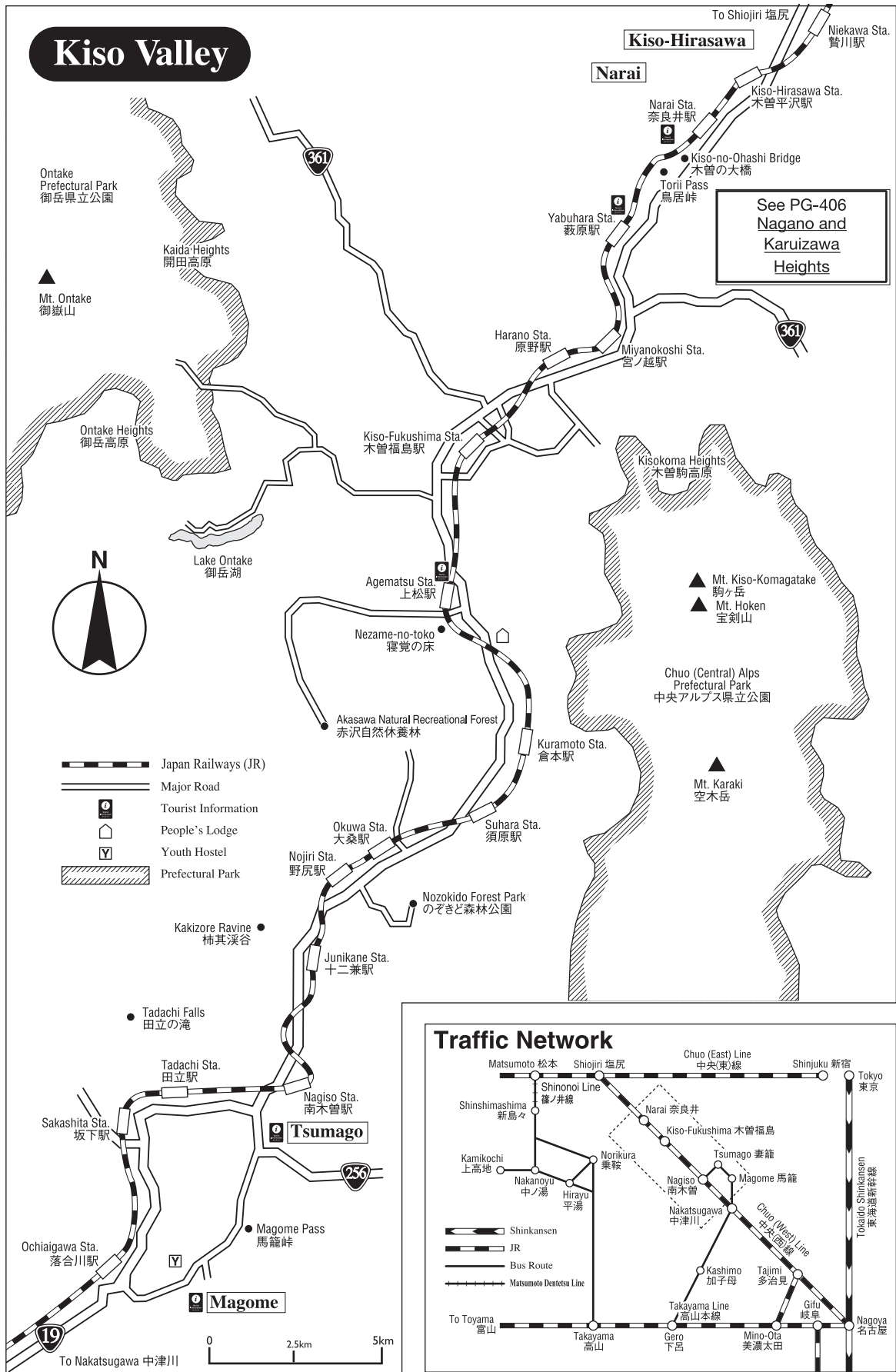
¥¥¥ = more than 15,000 yen

¥¥ = 8,001 yen – 15,000 yen

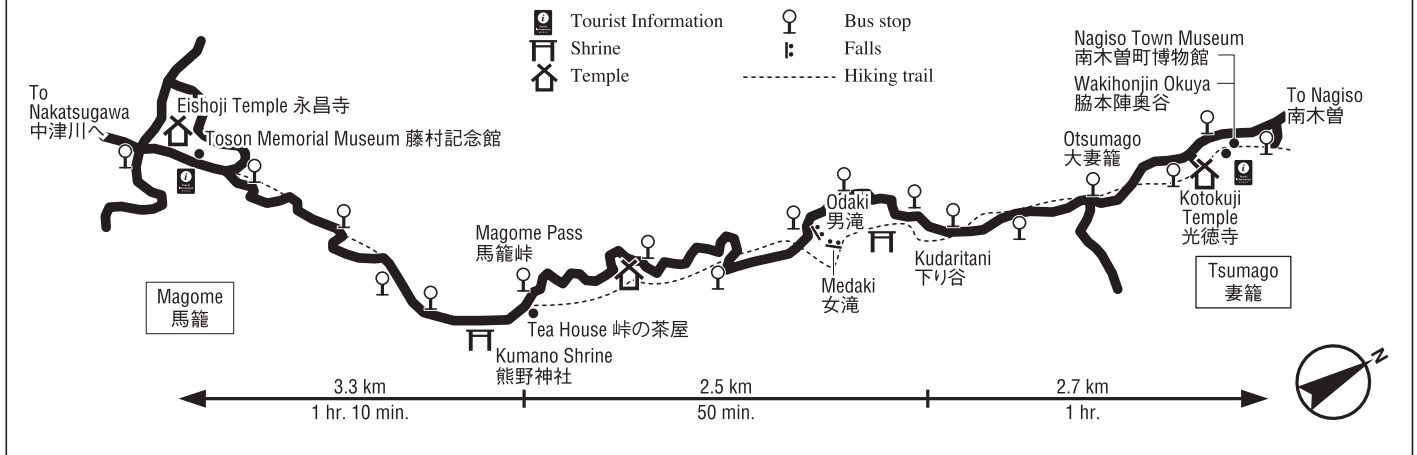
¥ = 8,000 yen or less

* Standard basis rate (no meals, taxes included)

*See p. 4 for admission and opening times.



Hiking Course between Magome and Tsumago



[Good to know] Admission and opening times at tourist attractions:

- Last entry to the most of attractions is 30 min. before the closing time.
- In general, if their weekly closing day (most are on Mon.) falls on a national holiday, they are open on the day and are closed on the following day after the holiday(s).
- Most are closed throughout / a part of New Year holiday period (especially Dec. 29–Jan. 3).
- Please visit the official website of each place / your nearest tourist information center for the updates.

[Good to know] Hiking / Trekking / Climbing safety:

- Most of the routes pass through habitats of bears and other wild animals.
- To ensure a safe visit for both you and the wildlife, please make an effort to prevent unwanted wild animal encounters.
- Stopping by the nearest tourist information center / a park visitor center is highly recommended to have the practical tips.

JNTO TIC (Tourist Information Center)

TIC of Japan National Tourism Organization is your helping hand while in Japan. Its main services are providing travel information and free literature on Japan such as tourist spots, transportation, and suggesting tour itineraries, etc.

1F, Shin-Tokyo Bldg., 3-3-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0005 Tel. 03-3201-3331 (in Japan)
Open daily from 9:00 to 18:00 (Closed on Jan. 1)
<https://www.japan.travel/en/plan/tic/>



Goodwill Guide Groups offer tourists from overseas local tours guided in English or other languages. The guides are registered with JNTO and display the badge shown. As they are volunteers, there is no charge for their service. You are only expected to pay for their transportation, admission to tourist facilities if you visit any and their meals if you eat with them.

JNTO Website

<https://www.japan.travel/en/plan/list-of-volunteer-guides/>



Japan Official Travel App



TOURIST INFORMATION in the area

Nakatsugawa Tourist Information Center

(next to JR Nakatsugawa Sta.):

Nigiwai-Plaza 1st fl., 1-1 Sakaemachi, Nakatsugawa City, Gifu

Hours: 8:30–18:00. Closed: Dec. 29–Jan.3 & the 3rd Sun. of Feb.

Tel. (0573) 62-2277

To find

other Tourist Information Centers,
visit <https://tic.jnto.go.jp/>



JNTO Website: <https://www.jnto.go.jp>

All information, including transportation schedules, fares, prices and accommodation charges which is contained in this leaflet is based on data as of October 2019, and is subject to change without notice. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of all information, regrettably errors do occasionally occur. Therefore, you should check with organizations concerned for updated and accurate information on your chosen destination. JNTO shall not be liable for any loss or damage of whatever nature that may arise as a result, directly or indirectly, from the use of any of the information or material contained in this leaflet.

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