

*Dam Guide* **Special Edition**

# Yamba Dam Guide

Get the most out of the  
Agatsuma area in Gunma!

New Dam Area Sightseeing Guide

Join a  
Yamba Dam  
tour!

→ See P4 for details





## The dam is in the center of Agatsuma!

Yamba Dam is located in the northwest part of Agatsuma in Gunma prefecture. Lake Yamba Agatsuma is a dam lake situated in Naganohara, the gateway to Kusatsu Onsen, which boasts the highest volume of any natural hot spring in Japan. Agatsuma River starts on the east side of the Torii Pass on the borders of Nagano and Gunma prefectures, cutting across Agatsuma in the east-west direction. It then runs through the mountains and comes out into the Kanto Plain where it merges with the Tone River. It is on the Agatsuma River where the Yamba Dam was built.

## Completed in 2020, this dam was 68 years in the making.

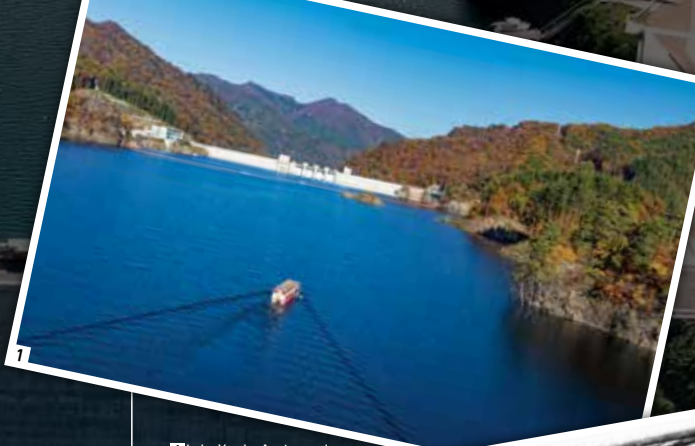
In September 1947, Typhoon Kathleen hit the Kanto area right after the end of World War II. Torrential rains across a wide area caused the Tone and Arakawa rivers to overflow, resulting in massive damage including 1,100 deaths and flooding in over 300,000 homes across six prefectures

excluding Kanagawa. With such terrible damage, there were calls for controlling the influx of water to the Tone River, and several plans for dams were proposed in Gunma. One of those was the current Yamba Dam built on the Agatsuma River. Five years later in 1952, the decision was made to build a dam on the Agatsuma Gorge in Naganohara, however, the dizzying speed at which society and the environment was changing, and reconstruction efforts after the war necessitated not only flood control, but also measures to deal with water shortages due to a growing population and water for industrial use. After solving each of these issues and changing the plans to fit the social landscape, 63 years has passed, with construction beginning in 1952. On March 31, 2020, the dam was finally completed, with operations starting on April 1.

## New aquatic scenery and sightseeing areas!

The dam not only provides water control, but also electricity. These aren't the only roles the dam fills, however. The dam lake also functions as an entertainment spot where visitors can enjoy a variety of activities. Thanks to the new Lake Yamba

Agatsuma, Agatsuma is now home to beautiful aquatic scenery and lots of fun lake activities. There are amphibious bus tours, canoeing and kayaking on the lake, lakeview camping and barbecuing, and other great new sightseeing highlights in the area. A new road was also built along with the dam for easy access to neighboring spots. Kawarayu Onsen, a hot spring with over 800 years of history, was moved to a new spot where it carries on with an ancient, traditional festival. Not only will you find long-standing lush natural resources and hot springs, but also the new face of the area, Yamba Dam. This spot shows plenty of promise for the future.



1 Lake Yamba Agatsuma is the sightseeing hub of the area. 2 Kurihashi, Saitama, where a levee was destroyed by Typhoon Kathleen in 1947. 3 Kawarayu Onsen, a hot spring with over 800 years of history.

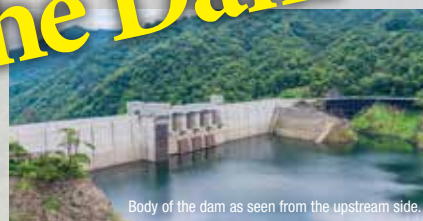
Collection: National Archives and Records Administration (USA)  
Provided by: National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Resilience  
(Photo has been trimmed)



## Nearby Area

Everything you need to know about Yamba Dam

# A Guide to the Dam and



Body of the dam as seen from the upstream side.

### Yamba Dam Data

Data	●Type: Concrete gravity dam
	●Dam height: 116 m ●Dam length: 290.8 m
	●Dam volume: 991,000 m <sup>3</sup>
	●Total water storage capacity: 107.5 million m <sup>3</sup>
	●Purpose: Disaster control, maintain normal flow functionality, provide city water, power generation
	●Rivers: Tone River system, Agatsuma River
	●Catchment area: 711.4 km <sup>2</sup> (Max. for Tone River upstream dam)
	●Flood control capacity: 65 million m <sup>3</sup> (Max. for Tone River upstream dam)

There's so much to see and do in the Yamba area!



Kazuko Kobayashi  
Official Yamba Dam Tour Guide  
Tsunagu Company Naganohara

### Yamba Dam Functions

#### ● Disaster control

The water level of the dam lake is lowered in advance of the typhoon season, and when floods due to torrential rains flow into the dam lake, the water is temporarily stored, and the outflow rate to the river is reduced, helping mitigate downstream basin flood damage.

#### ● Maintain normal flow functionality

The water flow rate is controlled to maintain the scenery downstream from the dam and in Agatsuma Gorge.

#### ● Provide city water

The dam provides city water to Gunma prefecture and other prefectures. Tap water is supplied to five prefectures including Gunma, and industrial water is provided to both Gunma and Chiba prefectures.

#### ● Power generation

A power plant downstream from the dam can produce up to 11,700 kW of electricity.

### Yamba Dam Features

#### ● Made using a local reconstruction method

In many cases when dams are built, residents must relocate to another area. However, when Yamba Dam was built, the village was moved to alternate mountainside land so that the local community could remain together at the new location.

#### ● Upstream area economic activity

Many dam construction sites are located in dead ends between mountains, but the upstream area of Yamba Dam is home to the three towns and villages of Naganohara, Kusatsu, Tsumagoi, and the former Kunimura, where nearly 20,000 people live and work in a bustling economic area.

Kaori Toyoda  
Official Yamba Dam Tour Guide  
Tsunagu Company Naganohara

Let's take a look at what the dam does!





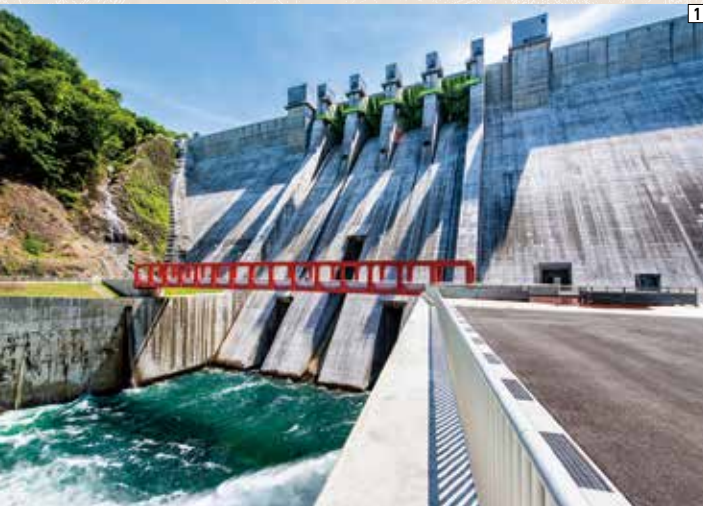
## Yamba dam and the neighboring area

# Around the dam

An interesting thing about dams is that these massive manmade structures seamlessly blend into the surrounding environment. After touring the dam, stop by the museum where you can learn about local history.

Looking at the dam up close is incredible!

# Learn



[1] Looking up from the bottom of the dam. [2] The spacious Yamba Dam crest. [3] An observation spot jutting out into the lake.



## What does Yamba Dam do now? A tour of the dam body

Yamba Dam is a rare example of a Japanese dam with a public elevator that connects the top and bottom. First, let's compare the scenery of the upstream area (lake side) with the downstream area from the 290.8-meter-long dam crest at the very top. Compared to the laid-back lake scenery of Lake Yamba Agatsuma, looking down on the Agatsuma Gorge from a height of 116 meters is intense! Now let's take the elevator down. The impression of the dam as viewed from the bottom is completely different from that at the top. You can really feel the immensity of this awesome structure!

**Yamba Dam Tour** ● Once or twice a month from April to November, tours of the usually closed inside of the dam body are offered to the public. One tour is held in the morning, and the other in the afternoon with a total capacity of 20 people. Tours are offered on a first come first served sign-up basis. For details on how to sign up, visit the Tsunagu Company Naganohara website ([tsunacom.or.jp/](http://tsunacom.or.jp/)). Tours are conducted by official Tsunagu Company Naganohara Yamba Dam Guides.

Come take the tour!

## Naruhodo! Yamba Museum



[1] This display shows the history of Yamba Dam. Take a look at the giant diorama in the center! [2] A building looking out over the dam lake. [3] Get a collectible dam card here!

On the first floor of the museum at Yamba Dam you'll find panels and videos that tell about its history, from its planning stages to construction. The second floor features models and other items that showcase the dam's construction, area geography, and its role.

📍 1121-31 Kawarabata, Naganoharamachi 📞 0279-83-2560 (Yamba Dam Administration Branch, Tone River Dams Integrated Control Office)  
🕒 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM 🗓 Open 365 days a year 🆓 Admission free



## Learn all about the history of Agatsuma Yamba Tenmei Mudflow Museum

Archaeological surveys conducted before the construction of Yamba Dam took place over 26 years, with an excavation site covering a nearly one million m<sup>2</sup> site in the Agatsuma River basin. The surveys uncovered heaps of artifacts from over 10,000 years of history, covering the time from the Jomon to Edo periods. These finds are now part of the collection at the Yamba Tenmei Mudflow Museum. Many villages buried under the mudflow triggered by the 1783 eruption of Mt. Asama were discovered, revealing previously unknown facts about the daily lives of people at the time. The Tenmei Mudflow Experience Theater shows the events of the August 5, 1783 mudflow in a documentary-style video. Edo period artifacts can be seen in the Tenmei Mudflow Exhibition Space, and items from before the mudflow are on display in the Themed Exhibition Space.



📍 1464-3 Hayashi, Naganoharamachi 📞 0279-82-5150  
🕒 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM 🗓 Wednesdays 🆓 ¥600

## Visit a power plant that provides energy for future Japan Tour the Yamba Power Plant

Directly under the dam is where you'll find the Yamba Power Plant. Using water released from the dam, it generates approximately 42 million kWh annually, an amount equivalent to that used by nearly 12,000 homes, using renewable energy and helping contribute to a carbon-free society.

### Yamba Dam Power Plant Tour

Free tours are available of the inside of the power plant, one of the most important sections of the dam. Tours are available four days a week, from Friday to Monday, and on holidays (excluding year-end/New year holidays). The tour takes about 30 minutes, and is held five times per day (10:00 AM, 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM, 2:00 PM, 3:00 PM). Tour participants must be at least elementary school age. No reservations are required. Simply sign up at the entrance to the Yamba Power Plant at the above times.

● Inquiries  
Agatsuma Power Plant  
Office, Gunma Prefecture

📞 0279-75-2746  
(Weekdays 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM)

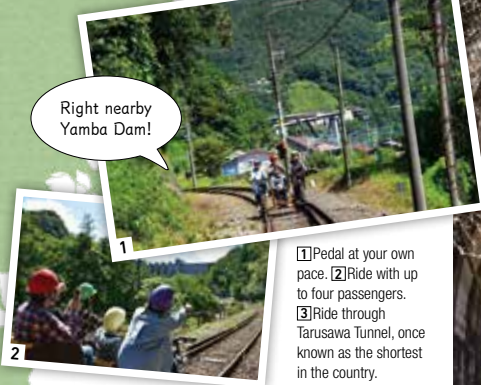


[1] Projection mapping is used to display the inner workings on an actual generator. [2] Pre-tour information.



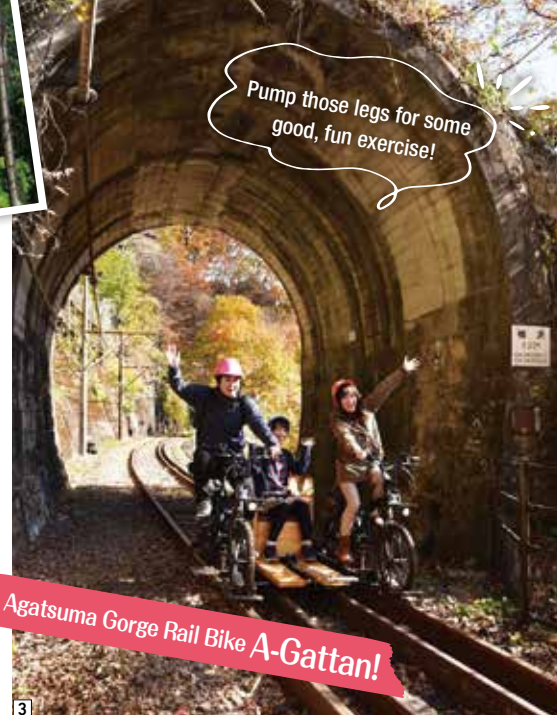
📍 Address 📞 Phone 🕒 Hours 🗓 Closed 🆓 Fee / Price





This attraction runs on the old JR Agatsuma Line tracks, which were replaced during the construction of the dam. Feel like a train conductor as you ride this unique bike on rails. Two to four people can ride at once, so hop on and pedal through the beautiful scenery of Agatsuma Gorge!

● Inquiries  
Agatsuma Gorge Area Promotion Center, Higashi Agatsuma  
☎ 868-1 Matsuya, Higashi Agatsumamachi ☎ 0279-26-9431  
🕒 First at 9:25 AM, 9 rides/day. Required time: About 25 min.  
(one way) 🗓 Wednesdays & Thursdays 🚗 3 riders: ¥3,000 one way/¥5,000 round trip 4 riders: ¥3,500 one way/¥6,000 round trip



**Agatsuma Gorge Rail Bike A-Gattan!**



## Area around Yamba Dam

Lake Yamba Agatsuma is the hub for new activities in Agatsuma.

There are loads of ways to have fun around this beautiful lake!

**Have fun**

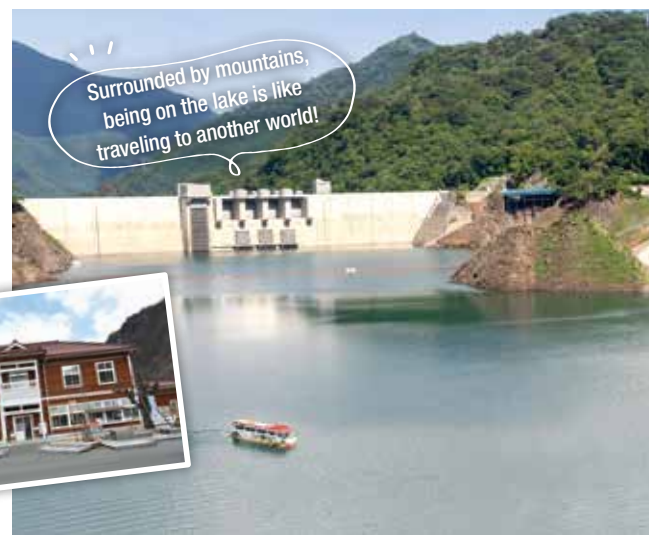
## Amphibious Bus

Hop on this unique amphibious bus for a leisurely drive on the roads and a cruise across Lake Yamba Agatsuma. The huge splash the bus makes as it rushes into the lake is a blast! Once on the lake though, you can sit back and enjoy the quiet.

☎ 904-3 Yokokabe, Naganoharamachi ☎ 0279-82-5597  
🕒 First at 9:30 AM, 5 tours/day. Required time: About 50 min.  
🗓 Wednesdays 🚗 ¥2,500 for adults, ¥1,250 for children  
Reservations [https://dtsline.jp/lp\\_nyagaten.php](https://dtsline.jp/lp_nyagaten.php)



Your tour starts and ends at Mizunoeki Maruiwa



## Kawarayu Onsen NOA

After leaving Kawarayu-Onsen Station on the JR Agatsuma Line, you'll see a white building overlooking the lake. NOA is the place to go for various area activities. Enjoy camping, barbecuing, and fun on the lake. You'll find everything you need here, so there's no need to bring any equipment or ingredients. Inside NOA there are hot springs and a craft beer brewery. You may even get the chance to sample some seasonal limited-edition beers!

📍 223-5 Kawarayu, Naganoharamachi  
☎ 090-6942-1223 🗓 Mondays

Get up close to Fudo Falls on a kayak!

Even kids can safely chop wood!

Sip some freshly-brewed craft beer.

Try SUP on the placid lake.

Most of the time, outdoor activities require gear and lessons, making it difficult for first timers, but NOA offers a variety of programs for beginners.



Check out the colorful bus up close!

Amphibious bus drivers (pilots) need both a large vehicle driver's license and a boat license!

After a big splash, the bus glides quietly across the lake.

There's so much to do!

## Kawarayu Onsen Sasayu



After having some fun around the lake, make sure to stop by Sasayu hot springs inside NOA.

📍 223-5 Kawarayu, Naganoharamachi (In NOA)  
☎ 090-6942-1223 🕒 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
🗓 Mondays 🚗 ¥990



Fun!

From local dishes to dam curry

Delicious!



# Food Spots

Savor some local foods!

This section covers some food spots in the Lake Yamba Agatsuma area. There's lots to enjoy, from dam curry to simple local dishes. Stop by one of these eateries while strolling around the dam!

Each spot is near the lake.



Stop by the roadside station at the foot of Fudo Ohashi Bridge for some of their famous dam curry at the Yamba Cafeteria. Make sure to try unique dam-themed dishes you won't find anywhere else, like the savory dam yaki grilled cakes and dam curry donuts.

1567-4 Hayashi, Naganoharamachi  
0279-83-8088 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM  
(Differs depending on the season)  
Every other Wednesday in winter

Michinoeki  
Yamba  
Furusato-  
kan

This roadside station offers area sightseeing information. The farmstand shop inside also sells local vegetables, local specialties, and a wide variety of souvenirs.

Enjoy dam curry on a special plate



This eatery is located on the first floor of the reconstructed Naganohara Town Office on the south side of the lake after crossing Maruiwa Ohashi Bridge. In addition to udon and soba, their large set meals are also popular. Feel free to stop by even if you just want a snack!

904-3 Yokokabe, Naganoharamachi  
0279-82-5056 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM  
Wednesdays

Pork cutlet smothered in sauce and an order of udon, the famous Gunma Golden Combo (Tengumatsu set meal)



Yamba  
Mizunoeki  
Maruiwa

Enjoy lunch with a view of the lake



Located right near the dam, we offer a full menu.  
Mr. Nakajima, proprietor

Udon  
Mugi no  
Kaori

This udon shop serves unique dam curry



On the left is the shrimp tempura and mochi udon. This restaurant is located right next to Yamba Dam.

This popular udon shop is known for their plentiful portions. Fun curry is served in a unique plate with marks representing the water level of the dam and a slice of konnyaku for the dam body.

994-11 Kawarabata, Naganoharamachi  
0279-82-1109  
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM Wednesdays

Make sure to try dishes made with Gunma Yamato Pork!  
Mr. Mizuide, proprietor

Akai  
Entotsu

Local cuisine cooked by a veteran chef



This restaurant is run by an expert chef. The varied menu features pork cutlets smothered in sauce, known as Gunma soul food, as well as the local Gunma cuisine Okirikomi Udon.

454-109 Kawarayu, Naganoharamachi  
0279-83-2552 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM,  
5:00 PM - 9:00 PM Thursdays

Look for the building done in a mountain hut style with a red chimney in the corner of the Kawarayu hot spring town!



This restaurant was relocated when the dam was built, but the delicious flavor of their soba beloved by locals remains unchanged. The local maitake mushroom tempura is the perfect match for soba.

991-6 Kawarabata, Naganoharamachi  
0279-83-2501 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM  
No scheduled holidays

Soba  
Restaurant  
Yamba

Delectable soba made with local buckwheat flour

Located next to Yamba Dam. Look for the building with the thick columns and beams.



Our soba is made with a special blend of local Agatsuma buckwheat flour.  
Mr. Tomizawa





Kawarayu Onsen has long been known to improve symptoms of rheumatism and joint pain. When the dam was built, the new hot spring town was moved to a new, high location about 80 meters away. In this spot, a new hot spring source was excavated, and hot spring inns and a communal bathhouse overlooking the lake welcome visitors today. Each inn is compact and cozy, offering homey service where you can enjoy hot springs straight from the source.

Kawarayu Onsen Association  
[HP]www.kawarayu.jp



### Kawarayu Onsen Communal Bathhouse Oyu



1 Hot water springs with a source of about 80°C.  
2 Look for the Genji crest at the entrance.

This communal bathhouse overlooking the lake features outdoor baths surrounded by trees. Although the springs have a slight odor of sulfur, the water is clear and continues to offer relief from joint and muscle pain as it has since long ago.

☎ 491-6 Kawarayu, Naganoharamachi  
☎ 0279-83-2591 (Kawarayu Onsen Association)  
🕒 10:00 AM - 5:30 PM 🗓 Jan. 1, Jan. 20,  
third Thursday of the month 💰 ¥500

A famous hot spring  
with 800 years of history

# Kawarayu Onsen Stay

According to legend, this hot spring was discovered by Minamoto no Yoritomo while hunting in the area in 1193. A new source was excavated when the dam was built, making it a simultaneously ancient and new hot spring.

Warm up in the  
gentle springs!



1 A cozy heated kotatsu table. Enjoy views of the lake from the guest room. 2 The inn started operation in 1661 and has hosted many writers and artists. 3 This library is built in a renovated old storehouse and is available to guests free of charge. 4 Gorgeous autumn foliage from the outdoor bath. 5 A lounge with a homey hearth.

### A historic, Edo period inn

#### Yamakikan

This inn features eight rooms. The retro guest rooms in a renovated traditional Japanese home, the meals made mainly with local ingredients, and the outdoor baths where you can truly experience the seasons make this hidden gem the perfect place to enjoy a relaxing stay.

☎ 454-91 Kawarayu, Naganoharamachi ☎ 0279-83-2221



1 A delicious course dinner served one dish at a time. 2 Enjoy the hot springs 24 hours a day. 3 Look for the building with the orange walls overlooking the lake. 4 Sleep in a cozy futon on a tatami bed.



### A hot spring inn with delicious food

#### Yamakiboshi

This inn features a restaurant with authentic course meals (Dinner reservations must be made when reserving a room). Come here for spacious guest rooms and hot springs straight from the source.

☎ 487-5 Kawarayu, Naganoharamachi ☎ 0279-83-2011

### Gaze out on the natural scenery of Agatsuma from the large windows

#### Marukiya Ryokan

This inn has six guest rooms with a modern Japanese design and large windows in the hot springs for taking in the seasonal beauty of the area. In addition to the hot springs, guests can savor rustic cuisine made with plenty of local ingredients.



1 In addition to separate large baths for men and women, there are also private baths. 2 Each of the six guest rooms features a different design.

☎ 490-12 Kawarayu, Naganoharamachi  
☎ 0279-83-2121

### Enjoy a meal served in crockery made here

#### Yamata Ryokan

This is the closest inn to the dam in the hot spring town. The kitchen boasts meals made with fresh vegetables from their very own garden. You can also try making pottery at the workshop next door.



1 Soak in the baths while taking in the scenery from the large windows. 2 The four guest rooms are perfect for a quiet stay.

☎ 454-51 Kawarayu, Naganoharamachi  
☎ 0279-83-2408

### An inn with Japanese-style rooms overlooking the dam

#### Yuai Ryokan

Compared to the highly acidic hot springs at Kusatsu, Kawarayu Onsen is gentle on the skin. Stay the night in a tatami mat room and soak in the gentle Kawarayu hot spring water here. The inn also has a Yamba Dam information corner.



1 Kick back, relax, and enjoy the gentle hot springs. 2 Five of the six rooms overlook the dam lake.

☎ 484-5 Kawarayu, Naganoharamachi  
☎ 0279-83-2016

### Enjoy izakaya food here

#### Gohachi

This inn is also home to a Japanese pub. Some lodging plans include meals, but you can also stay at the inn and just head over to the pub to enjoy their full menu. Of course there's also hot springs!



1 The inn, named Sansui, is home to two guest rooms. 2 Japanese cypress baths with hot springs straight from the source.

☎ 485-8 Kawarayu, Naganoharamachi  
☎ 0279-83-2447

The  
strange hot water  
splashing festival!



On the coldest day of the year, men gather to splash each other with hot water!

Nearly 400 years after Minamoto no Yoritomo discovered the hot springs, they suddenly dried up. To revive them, a chicken was sacrificed as an entreaty to the gods and the springs once again bubbled forth. People splashed each other with hot water in joy, marking the origin of this festival. Each year on January 20, men split into two teams wearing red or white loincloths splash each other with hot water.

The festival is  
held in front  
of Communal  
Bathhouse  
Oyu!





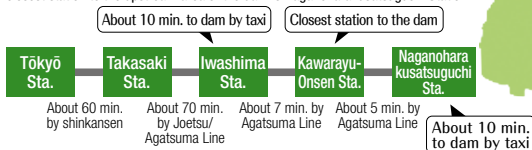
# I N F O R M A T I O N

## ■ Access to Yamba Dam from Tokyo

[By Train] (Does not include transfers and wait time)

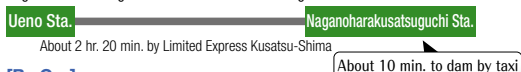
### ● Joetsu/Hokuriku Shinkansen + JR Agatsuma Line

Take the Joetsu or Hokuriku shinkansen to Takasaki. Switch to the Agatsuma Line, then go to Yamba Dam. Iwashima Station is close to the downstream area of the dam (near Agatsuma Gorge), but the closest to the dam is Kawarayu-Onsen Station. The closest station to the upstream area of the dam is Naganoharakusatsuguchi Station.



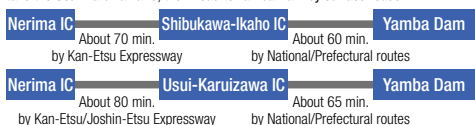
### ● JR Limited Express Kusatsu-Shima

Take the Limited Express Kusatsu-Shima from Ueno Station to reach Naganoharakusatsuguchi Station without transferring.



[By Car]

From the east, take the expressway to Shibukawa-Ikaho IC, and from the south, take the Usui-Karuizawa IC, then head to Yamba Dam by surface roads.



## ■ Yamba Dam Area Climate

The area around Yamba Dam is situated at an altitude of nearly 600 m. It is very cold in winter, but not too hot in summer, making it quite pleasant. It snows in winter, but not too much.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Average low (°C)	-8.1	-7.4	-4	1.5	7.4	12	16.3	17	13.5	7.3	0.8	-5.1
Average high (°C)	-1.2	0.1	4.1	11	17.1	19.9	23.6	24.4	20.5	14.6	8.6	1.9
Rainfall (mm)	87	85	108	105	131	177	204	161	177	148	79	77

### Getting around at Yamba Dam

Cycles are available for rent at NOA and Michinoeki Yamba Furusato-kan where they can also be returned.



■ Yamba Tabi Navi

## [ Yamba Dam Area Sightseeing Bases ]

Free parking is available for customers visiting restaurants and shopping. Toilets are also available, making these spots a great base for your trip.



### Michinoeki Yamba Furusato-kan

Located on the north side of Fudo Ohashi Bridge, which spans Lake Yamba Agatsuma. It's the closest sightseeing facility to the dam and offers bicycle rentals and a free foot bath.

1567-4 Hayashi, Naganoharamachi

0279-83-8088 8:30 AM – 6:00 PM

(Differs depending on the season)

Every other Wednesday in winter



### Michinoeki Agatsumakyo

Located in the downstream area of the dam, this is the starting location for hiking in Agatsuma Gorge. It's home to a hot spring and dog park, and is close to the starting location for the A-Gattan! railway bike.

6441 Mishima, Higashi Agatsumamachi

0279-67-3193 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Open 365 days a year



### Yamba Mizunoeki Maruiwa

Located at the foot of Maruiwa Ohashi Bridge, this spot offers dining and camping surrounded by the gorgeous scenery of Agatsuma Lake and the mountains. It is also the launching point for the amphibious bus.

904-3 Yokokabe, Naganoharamachi

0279-82-5056 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Wednesdays