

The secret of Kakushimizu

Q: Why is it called Kakushimizu (hidden water)?
 A: It is because the spring water soaks into the soil right after it appears.
 Q: How much water comes out?
 A: About 5 to 20 liter a minutes. It won't come out during the dry spell of winter. The rainfall is soaked into the ground and gushes out as spring water about a month later. Oike, on the other hand, gushes out 10 to 20 tons of water a minute, which is 1000 times more than Kakushimizu.
 Q: Is the water tasty?
 A: Yes. It is soft water with little dissolved components. Its temperature is about 5°C to 9°C. Its coldness makes it taste great!



Trekking in autumn leaves
Oike Pond ~ Kakushimizu

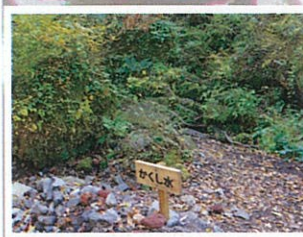
There are two ways to appreciate autumn leaves: appreciate them from outside and experience it inside. The former means seeing and admiring the great view of the mountainside covered with autumn leaves after hiking up to the summit of the mountain. The latter means strolling in the forest covered with the autumn leaves, soaking up the atmosphere of autumn. Taking pictures of mushrooms or mosses, listening to the birds' calls, checking the shapes of the fallen leaves in a picture book...all of them will let you feel autumn.

The route from Oike Pond to Kakushimizu is the very spot you can experience autumn inside! On the way to Kakushimizu, you can enjoy various things illustrated above.

Around Oike Pond Park, the leaves turning red or yellow in late October, and the peak of their beauty is in November.

There are various kinds of maple leaves in Oike area, which show us picturesque hues. At the end of this course, Kakushimizu spring will share you with cold and clear spring water.

05 Kakushimizu elev. 960m



Farther into the autumn forest, rocks and stones gradually increase on the trail. Some parts of the trail are bumpy and collapsed due to the heavy rain in July 2020. Follow the ropes and tapes which indicate the direction. On the left, a little stream of water will appear. That is Kakushimizu!

04 Into the autumn forest...



Hiking up a little from the big zelkova tree, the trail joins the one going round Oike Pond. There, a forest with various trees spreads. Ohyou (Ulmus laciniata), Harunire (Ulmus davidiana), Aodamo (Fraxinus lanuginosa), and Mitsudekaede (Acer cissifolium) show us colorful autumn hues. There is a depression where water stands after rain. Withered trees stand still there, creating a serene atmosphere. Many birds are flying and singing. A badger may pop up all of a sudden.



03 Zelkova tree in Oike



Walking farther into the forest, you will find a big zelkova tree. It stands with dignity like a sacred tree in a shrine. Nearby stands "a tree grabbing a big rock". Imagining what it is like will incline you to set off to see the real one at once!

01 Oike Trailhead elev. 860m

Turning right at Handa Kogen Drive-in on Yamanami Highway Junction and driving for about 10 minutes toward Oike Pond Park, you will get to the parking area. Across the parking area, there are toilets and an entrance gate. At the entrance gate, a donation box is placed to collect 100 yen per person for the cleaning and maintenance of the park. Donate 100 yen, and let's get into the forest!

02 Oike spring and Dragon God



Oike spring has been chosen one of the 100 best water sources in Japan. From that blue-colored bottom, clear water is gushing out constantly. There is a stairs to go down toward the spring. You can use the ladles for public to dip up water and drink. There is a folklore about a dragon in Oike....

Dragon God in Oike

Once upon a time in Handa Plateau, there was a rich man called "Asahi-Choja". One day, he was so worried about the severe draught that he visited Dragon God in Oike Pond to pray for rain. He promised to give Him one of his daughter if He could bring rain. Sure enough, it rained and the cropfields in Handa were maintained and revived. Asahi, though he had promised the Dragon, did not want to let his daughters go. To save the distressed father, the youngest daughter, Chiyo, went to Oike Pond alone at midnight. By the pond, she stood in front of the statue of Goddess of Mercy and waited for the Dragon God to appear, reciting sutra. Suddenly, a giant serpent sprang out of the water and tried to swallow Chiyo. Then, the Goddess of Mercy jumped into the serpent's mouth! The serpent shed tears, saying "Finally, my soul can rest in peace. Thank Heavens!" and vanished. Left alone, Chiyo did not go home but went down the mountain. She got married to the head of Takumi district later.

want to walk more?

The trail goes on farther into the mountain. The slope gradually gets steeper. If you feel tired when you get to Kakushimizu, give up going farther and return. If you are still full of energy and want to walk more, walk into the mountain from kakushimizu for about 50 minutes. You will reach another depression called "Sobabakke", where water stands after a spell of rain and gets muddy. In autumn when it scarcely rains, it dries up to become a flatland. The autumn leaves here are awesome! The colorful autumn leaves on the mountain side makes you forget the fatigues of the hike! From Sobabakke, you can hike to Mt.Hiji or Bogatsuru by way of Ootogoshi, or to Mt.Kurodake by way of Seriguchi valley.

