

Cool Summer Sights



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Sada Chinkabashi: Shimanto, Kochi Prefecture

The Shimanto River runs through the western part of Kochi Prefecture on the island of Shikoku. The river's waters are so pristine that it is called the "last clear stream in Japan," and the *chinkabashi*, or "sinking bridges," along its length are a famous sight. A *chinkabashi* is designed to become submerged when the water levels rise, for instance, in a typhoon. The lack of railings helps protect the bridge from being damaged by floating timber or masses of earth being carried downstream by floodwaters.

Sada Chinkabashi is in the city of Shimanto, roughly a two and a half hours' drive from Kochi Ryoma Airport, which is a 75-minute flight from Tokyo. Walking across it, with green mountains rising on either side and a cool breeze blowing across the clear water, you feel as if you were taking a stroll on the surface of the river.



***Kikyo* (Balloon Flower) : Kami, Hyogo Prefecture**

Kikyo is the Japanese name for an East Asian flower that blooms from summer through fall, known as “balloon flower” in English for the way its buds swell like balloons before blossoming. The *kikyo*’s elegant star-shaped arrangement of petals appears as a motif on summer kimonos and in family crests. The temple Henjoji in the town of kami, Hyogo Prefecture, about two and a half hours’ drive from Osaka International Airport, is renowned for its *kikyo*, with more than a thousand individual plants on the temple grounds. The *kikyo* of Henjoji begin to open gracefully during the rainy season in June, and while in bloom the blue-violet flowers present a beautiful and cooling sight.