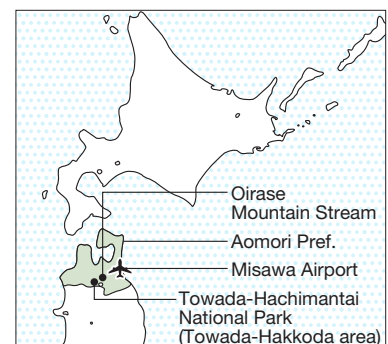


Glimpses of Japan's Wilderness and Old Roads



Oirase Mountain Stream: Aomori Prefecture

Aomori Prefecture is at the northern tip of Honshu, the largest of Japan's four major islands. Here you can find a section of the Towada-Hachimantai National Park, rich in scenes of natural splendor, such as the beautiful Oirase Mountain Stream (Oirase Keiryu). The appearance of the area changes day by day and is especially beautiful from late spring to early summer, when the leaves are fresh and green. Along its 14 kilometers (around nine miles), the mountain stream also offers a wide range of aspects—some precipitous and some peaceful. While hiking or cycling along the river trail, you can spot a dozen waterfalls and even wild Japanese serows (*Nihon kamoshika*). Looking for some time away from city life in the concrete jungle? Oirase—just two and a half hours by plane and car from Tokyo's Haneda Airport—will give you a truly refreshing experience.





Tsumago-juku: Nagano Prefecture

Tsumago-juku is located at the southern end of Nagano Prefecture, the geographic center of the Japanese archipelago; it is about a two-hour drive from Chubu Centrair International Airport near Nagoya. Early in the seventeenth century the Nakasendo was completed as a route connecting the shogun's capital of Edo (today's Tokyo) with Kyoto, the imperial capital. Post towns developed at 69 locations along the route with facilities to provide food and lodgings for travelers on foot. Of these, Tsumago-juku was the 42nd counting from Edo. Toson Shimazaki (1872–1943), a renowned Japanese poet and novelist, was from this area; he was born in Magome-juku, the 43rd post town on the route, nine kilometers (five and a half miles) from here. Tsumago-juku preserves its traditional appearance, and many of its historical buildings are still in use as inns or restaurants. It attracts many domestic and international visitors, who can directly experience sights and scenes redolent of centuries past as they hike or stroll around the area.

