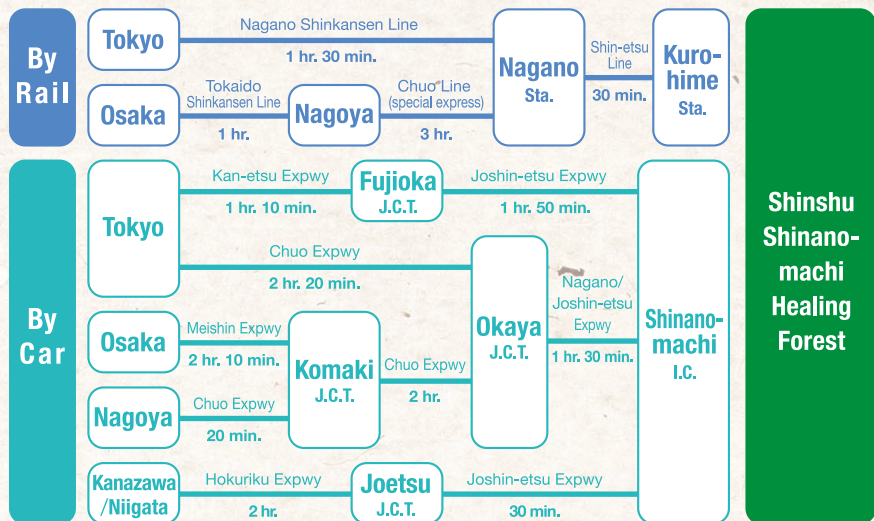


Convenient Transportation Access to Shinano-machi



The Role of Healing Forest as a Focus for Rehabilitation Activity

Pursuing positive initiatives for making the most of the powers of the forest, the town of Shinano-machi leads the way in this field of rehabilitation. Since 2003, the Afan Woodland Trust with Mr. C.W. Nicol as President has been focusing on the "Afan 5-Sense Project" in collaboration with a number of businesses. Its objective is to physically and mentally rehabilitate children with trauma or visual disabilities by inviting them to a woodland environment and stimulating their five senses through a variety of therapeutic programs in the forest. The Afan Woodland Trust is disseminating information about its activities and their effectiveness throughout the world.



In April 2006, the town of Shinano-machi, Nagano Pref. was recognized by the Japanese Government as a "Phase-1 Forest Therapy (R) Base" due to its superb forest environment and the results of physiological tests conducted there.

Shinano-machi, Nagano Pref. : www.town.shinanomachi.nagano.jp **Shinano-machi Search**

Healing Forest official site : iyashinomori.main.jp

Shinshu Shinano-machi Eco Tourism Association : www.shinano-machi.com

Cellular phone and smart phone users, please access from here ▶



■ For inquiries, please contact :



"Healing Forest" and Business Investment Promotion Sub-section, Industry & Tourism Promotion Section, Shinano Town Office

428-2, Kashiwabara, Shinano Town, Nagano Pref., 389-1392, Japan
TEL : 81-(0)26-255-5925 FAX: 81-(0)26-255-4470
 Hours (weekdays) : 8:30 ~ 17:15
 E-mail : iyashi@town.shinanomachi.nagano.jp



Shinshu Shinano-machi Eco Tourism Association

2692-39, Kashiwabara, Shinano Town, Nagano Pref., 389-1305, Japan
TEL : 81-(0)26-255-3226 FAX: 81-(0)26-255-5454
 Hours : 9:00 ~ 17:00 (closed on Wednesdays)
 E-mail : info@shinano-machi.com

"Healing Forest" in Shinano-machi, Nagano where doctors are available

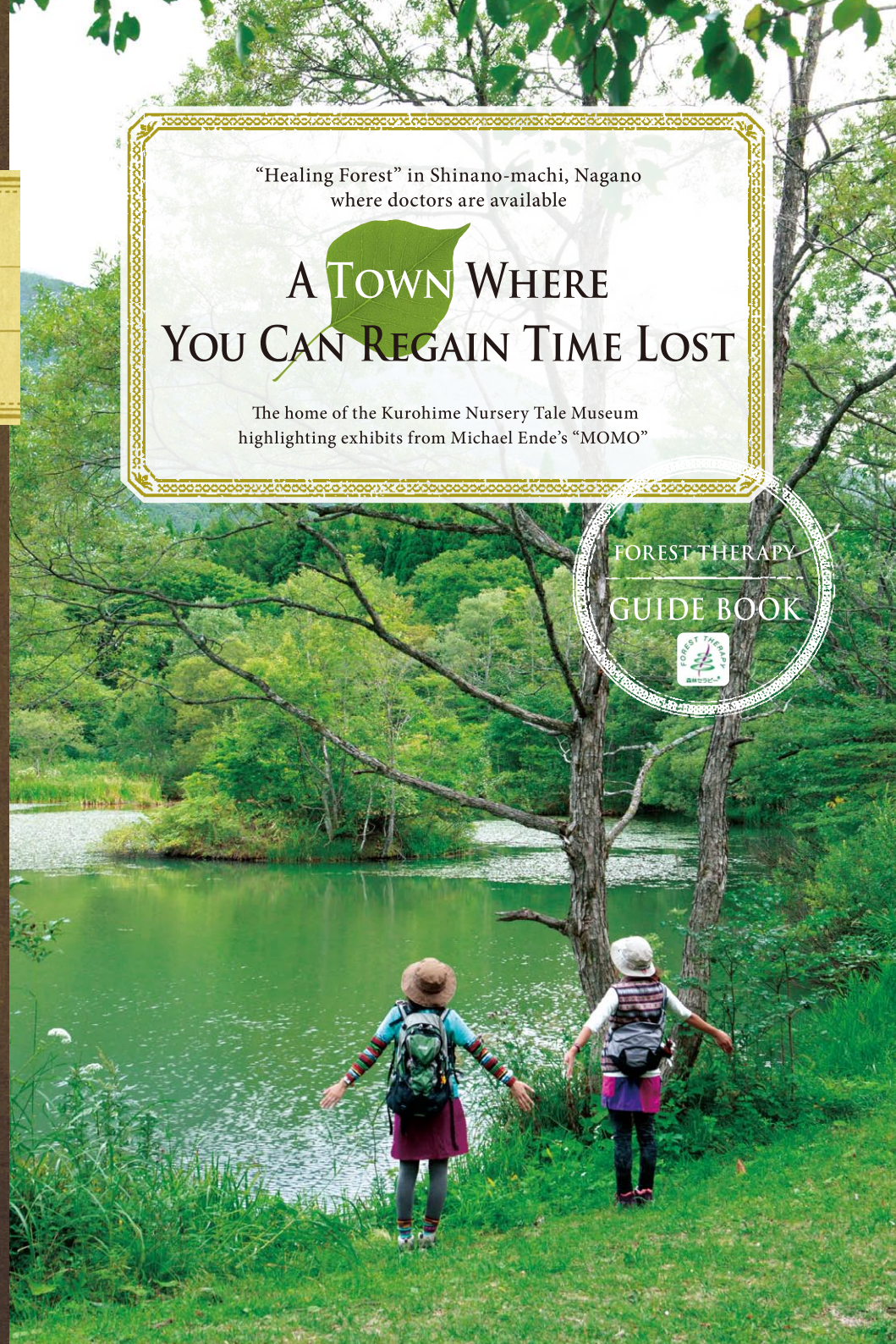
A TOWN WHERE YOU CAN REGAIN TIME LOST

The home of the Kurohime Nursery Tale Museum highlighting exhibits from Michael Ende's "MOMO"

FOREST THERAPY
GUIDE BOOK



Publisher : Shinshu Shinano-machi Healing Forest Promotion Committee, Shinano-machi, Nagano Pref.



All about Our Forest Therapy Techniques



Tanden (lower abdomen)-style Deep Breath

This breathing technique allows one to inhale and absorb oxygen into the whole body thereby revitalizing cells while simultaneously activating serotonin neurons that stimulate one's positive presence of mind.



Hydrotherapy

Various therapeutic effects are available by soaking your feet in natural therapeutic water. We offer this hydrotherapy modeling after the Kneipp therapy that originated in Bad Woerishofen in Germany, an advanced health resort city.



Aromatherapy

Healing Forest Lodging facilities offer what is known as steam aroma bathing which is one of the most effective of aromatherapies. In addition, the participant can enjoy the hands-on experience of extracting essential oils from local fauna.



Counseling in the Forest

We offer therapeutic counseling in a totally relaxing forest environment to those who wish to receive counseling on various matters.



Harmony Therapy

In this therapeutic exercise, participants seek a harmony of body and soul by assuming yoga postures such as the "pose of a tree" and the "pose of a dancing leaf" in the forest or by playing and strolling harmoniously in the forest.



Healing via Hands-on Experiences

Participants can enjoy a number of hands-on experiences for therapeutic purposes, including how to create your own essential oil from a tree or leaves after identifying your favorite aroma, as well as pottery-making, flute-crafting and soba or noodle-making experiences that are effective in calming your mind and enhancing your power of concentration.



Nature Observation

In this experience, participants stroll around the forest guided by a professional naturalist, whose explanation of various plants leads to a unique form of healing.



Finger Nail Massage Therapy

This therapy utilizes a finger nail massage therapy based on the Fukuda-Abo theory. At the base of human finger nails are vital points of autonomic nerves that affect one's overall health. We pinpoint the finger that needs to be stimulated according to your specific symptoms and use a toothpick to activate it.



Phytotherapy or Plant Therapy

This therapy fully and effectively utilizes the blessings from nature and the forest – plants in the form of medicinal herbs and essential oils deriving from plants, as well as making full use of locally produced vegetables, soba buckwheat noodles, mountain vegetables and mushrooms. For example, natural aroma spray is used as insect repellent and local medicinal-type herbs for insect bites.



Hand-bath Therapy

Hand-bath using an essential oil is almost free of worry about causing allergy. As such, it is as effective as well as safety-assured therapy and is recommended for participants of all ages.



Nordic Walking

In Shinano-machi, considerations are given to enhancing the effects of forest walking by having a trainer accompany participants, who will guide you while paying close attention to each participant's health condition such as heart rate, etc. In particular, we recommend Nordic walking in order to maintain or improve one's balance and safety on slopes and other varied terrain.



The Forest can be your Counselor

After all five senses have been fully awakened, stroll around the forest and find that "favorite spot" that appeals to your sensibility and meditate there for about 30 minutes. By spending some quiet time in the forest this way, you will discover a state of mind that is calm and peaceful without even knowing it.



Strolling in the Night Forest

The forest at night is a world of fascinating darkness, in summer or winter. Enjoy yourself in the moon-lit forest, where the therapeutic phytonic element from plants and leaves that was emitted from the trees during the daytime settles down at night. This night tour of the forest is safe and worry-free because it is guided by an experienced trainer.



The Innovative Spirit of Shinano-machi

The forest environment has beneficial effects related to mind and body

The town of Shinano-machi is where medical research and studies on therapeutic effects of the forest were conducted for the first time in Japan.

Positive effects of a 3-hour walk in the forest accompanied by a forest medical trainer

A survey was recently conducted with some 100 participants by taking their blood samples and measuring changes in their autonomic nerve system. The survey results indicated that a positive balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nerves brings us closer to a naturally healthy condition. The bridging process between our mind and body via the autonomic nerve system is a vitally important mechanism to sustain positive quality of life. A forest environment is a precious blessing from Mother Nature, where people can regain the positive power of living by subjecting themselves to this natural power even for a brief period of time. This truly expresses the objective of our "Healing Forest"
Dr. Syoko Homma

It was possible to reduce my stress hormone imbalance by 60% on the first day of a two-night, three-day session by spending time with a forest medical trainer in the Healing Forest.

[Blood sampling & test : Chiba University]

It was verified that thanks to the Healing Forest experience, NK (natural killer) cells that inhibit viruses and cancer cells increased in number and became activated while the resulting positive effects also continued for at least one month or so.

[Blood sampling & test : Nippon Medical School]

Positive effects our "Healing Forest" program has to offer . . .

Our program, consisting of walking in the forest accompanied by a forest medical trainer and spending time in one of our "Healing Forest Lodging" facilities, mainly targets those individuals who are striving daily on a positive basis while accumulating stress in our restless modern society. Our objectives are to allow the participant to:

Rediscover one's true self amid a natural environment

Regain one's appropriate rhythm of life amid a natural environment

Find one's own soothing place amid a natural environment

Forest medical trainers

Our town-authorized trainers – some are aromatherapists and others with a variety of professional qualifications – enthusiastically support healing and health advancement for participants by means of forest therapy and other methods developed by Shinano-machi within its own environment.

Should any emergency whatsoever happen in the forest, participants can rest easy since all of our forest medical trainers are fully qualified Japan Red Cross Emergency First Aid Personnel.

Healing Forest Lodging facilities

"Healing Forest Lodging" facilities which have been recognized by the town after attending town-authorized special lecture courses, offer aromatherapy experiences to guests while serving meals featuring freshly harvested local vegetables, mountain vegetables and mushrooms.

The forest is easily accessible to doctors

Any entrance/exit of the forest is easily accessible to downtown hospitals in less than 10 minutes, allowing us to respond to any sudden illness or emergency that may occur during one's stay in Shinano-machi. It is also possible to arrange liaison and collaboration between local physicians and family doctors.

Healing Forest Walking Courses

The town has established a number of attractive Healing Forest Walking Courses, each taking slopes, distances, terrain and other variations into account.

Kazuhiro Kouriki,
forest medical trainer

Spring



As snow begins to melt, butterbur flower buds pop out and lovely spring ephemeral plants burst into bloom. Marshlands are graced by marsh marigold and mizubasho (skunk cabbage) flowers. Fresh greenery of Japanese larch trees enlivens the forest while a wide variety of mountain vegetables please visitors and locals alike. . . . All of these signal the arrival of the exhilarating new season!



Everyone is excited by lovely wild flowers and delicate mountain vegetables.



"The forest in the springtime reveals soft and gentle utterances wherever you look. It fills your heart with pleasant contentment as it slowly revitalizes you from the core of your body."



"The forest is your counselor"

Find your own favorite place in the forest and enjoy yourself as a relaxing time passes by. Lie down and let your body and soul unwind completely.



"Breathing method"

Embraced by nature's fresh verdure, deeply inhale the forest's newly produced oxygen and phytoncides into your body and soul.

Check Your Clothes

Spring Style



Wearing a towel or a scarf around your neck is effective for both keeping you warm and protecting your neck against UV.

A hat is a must for protection against UV in spring.

Since unmelted snow can remain in the shade, the use of sneakers or trekking shoes is recommended.

Springtime weather in the highlands is very changeable and there can be significant temperature differences even during the daytime, so keep yourself warm and protect against strong winds by wearing a long-sleeve jacket + wind breaker + long pants.



On Lake Nojiri, enjoy views of wild cherry blossoms against the backdrop of a beautiful snowcapped mountain at the same time. In addition, the course is dotted with many scenic spots unique to this time of year, where you encounter views that harbor the magic of the seasons.



A tunnel of fresh foliage offers gently undulating ups and downs.



Access to spots fronting on the refreshing lake is unique to this course.



OP Yoga in the forest

Participants practice yoga poses in the forest, slowly inhaling a deep breath to recharge energy and draw Mother Earth into their bodies.



OP Nordic walking

Participants take a lively walk along the highland course with poles in hands. This kind of walking is an effective aerobic exercise.

Summer

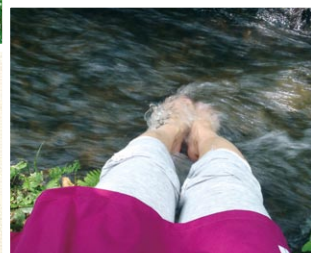
Shinano-machi in summer is so refreshingly cool that no air-conditioners are needed. The forest itself retains its intrinsic, unspoiled green. Bathing your feet in a crystal-clear stream and watching butterflies and dragonflies flit about is sure to remind one of childhood. The "Therapeutic Forest" is an ideal natural environment, allowing you to bathe in the highland sunlight and breezes to the fullest and recover your healthy body and soul.



"The forest is the best place to cool off in the summer! I hope you enjoy this comfortable coolness unique to our highlands."

Enjoy summer flowers as well as a medley of insects enjoying their heyday.

In the forest, green foliage curtains cut off 80% of UV.



Dip your feet in a mountain stream. The chill proves it's the real mountain water.



Masako Oura, forest medical trainer

Check Your Clothes

Summer Style

A hat is a must for UV protection! Our recommended color is white or beige because black is prone to attract bees, which could be unpleasant. If you have no light-color hat, it is OK to drape a white towel on the hat.

Legs and feet are most susceptible to bee/gnat bites, so remember to cover your lower limbs. Of course, you may also need to use insect repellent spray.

Wearing sandals is not recommended. Instead, wear easily removable sneakers or trekking shoes, since on the way you may feel like soaking your feet in a refreshing stream.

A shirt with half-length sleeves is OK, but it's better to have a light jacket to be prepared for any morning or evening chill. We also suggest you use underwear made of materials other than cotton.

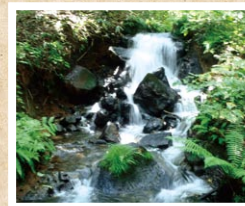
Sufficient hydration is a very important precaution in summer. Sports drinks or barley water that contain a bit of salt and minerals are recommended. Also remember to bring a towel as a neck cover and/or sunscreen.



A recommended summer course

Ojika Ike (Ojika Pond) Course

This 1.2km-long course around Ojika Pond is friendly to anyone because it has practically no difference of elevation. The course area is an enjoyable year-round outdoor leisure site: a large colony of marsh marigold flowers in spring and the base for snowshoeing in winter. The course entrance is close to the Kurohime Ranch and Kurohime Nursery Tale Museum where toilet facilities are readily available.



The course contains two small waterfalls. Why not bathe in the minus ions from the falls that are said to promote skin health?



The course as it passes through a Japanese cedar grove is cool even in midsummer due to gentle wafting breezes.



The Kurohime Nursery Tale Museum where the original pictures of "MOMO" by Michael Ende are featured.



OP Making dokudami (chameleon plant) lotion

Try your hand at making dokudami (chameleon plant) lotion. A history about medicinal herbs and sampling of herb tea are also available here.

*These attractions are seasonally limited, so please check with us.



OP Extracting essential oil

Try your hand at extracting essential oils which embody the forest aroma in a condensed form. It comes with a bonus of gentle aromatic floral water.

Autumn

Autumn is the season when mountainsides are colorfully attired in scarlet and gold foliage standing out against the deep blue of a fine autumn sky. This is the season in which we tend to feel a kind of nostalgia. Perhaps this is because our sensitivity is enhanced with the transition of seasons from the heat of summer to the chill of winter. For those more mature in years, an autumn trip often means an opportunity to let the heartstrings ring with nostalgia. A plethora of seasonal taste treats – such as soba noodles made from newly harvested buckwheat, a variety of fresh-picked fruit, newly harvested rice and mushrooms – make autumn even more enjoyable.



"Autumn is when Mother Nature presents herself in a vivid kaleidoscope of colors. It is also when seasonal delicacies from nature abound. We do hope you will enjoy them all to your hearts' content."

Katsuhide Koike,
Shinano Town Office
Section of
Healing Forest



Hakui-ji Temple was built in honor of the famous Edo-period haiku poem master, Kobayashi Issa. Works of haiku by poets who have visited this temple can be found on the temple ceiling.



Enjoy blooming cosmoses to the end of September and tinted autumnal leaves from October.

Soba noodle dishes are true gourmet delights in autumn. In Shinano-machi, daily temperatures often differ markedly between morning and night, resulting in foggy landscapes. Buckwheat raised under such seasonal climate conditions is valued as "Kiri-shita" (fog-raised) buckwheat, which, when cooked as noodles, is characterized by a rich sweetness and aroma.

Check Your Clothes



Remember to bring a wind breaker with you so that you can put it on when chilly.

Autumn is a fine season for walking in the forest, but wear sneakers or trekking shoes for safety.

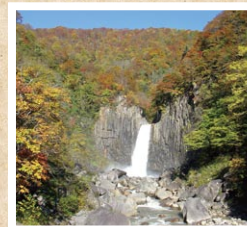
As the fall colors hit their peak, it can become a bit on the chilly side, so be prepared to wear warm clothes.

Winds are likely to become a bit chilly as autumn deepens. Thin gloves are a welcome item allowing you to be warm and active even in the chill.

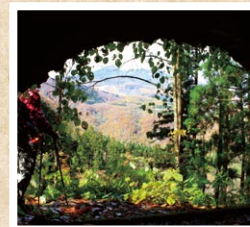
A recommended autumn course

Naena Taki (Naena Waterfall) Course

This course is a little more than 7km-long in total length, requiring a bit of tenacity. But it is far from roadways, and you hear the sounds of nature only – the twittering of small birds and the murmuring streams. At the arrival point is the Naena Waterfall, one of Japan's best 100 waterfalls. The falls congratulate you upon your successful arrival.



Amid a colorfully distinctive natural setting, the falls, cascading down a 55-meter drop in elevation, are overwhelming.



There is also a cave associated with the legend of the Robin Hood-like thief named Jiraiya.



A close view of the impressive falls from a nearby suspension bridge.



Steeped in history, this course retains the site of a former tramcar track reminiscent of bygone days.



OP Hands-on soba noodle making

Autumn is the season of new soba buckwheat noodles. Noodles made on your own are especially tasty.

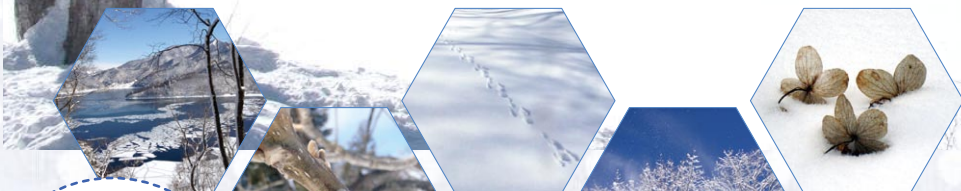


OP Night tour of the forest

Enjoy a guided walk through the forest together with the stars in the crisp night sky.

W inter

Winter in Shinano-machi is a perfect snow-white world. On fine days, the blue sky and the white snow combine to create a beautifully contrasting snowscape. Go into the forest and walk around, yes like a child, enjoying yourself on a sleigh ride, tracking the footprints of foxes, rabbits and squirrels... and much more! Why not try these healing experiences that can be enjoyed only in a winter wonderland?



"The forest in winter is delightfully beautiful, exuding its own unique ambience. Delve into the snowy outdoors to enjoy yourself to your heart's content or simply to appreciate the exquisite sound of silence. Why not experience our winter forest on your own?"

Many think there is nothing particular to see in a winter forest. To the contrary, the fact is there are many – trees show totally new forms of expression.

The waters of Ojika-ike Pond and Lake Nojiri are frozen in winter. Traces of animal activity can be found here and there on the snow. Snowshoeing is an easy and enjoyable way to walk on snow. Foot gear like this is readily available.

Ski wear or winter clothing is recommended to protect against the cold! Weathers can be changeable and your body temperature can rise after actively moving around, so if possible, wear layered garments so that you can adjust according to circumstances.

Gloves and sunglasses are essential for on-snow activities! On fine days, also remember to use anti-sun tan oil.



As snow accumulates, tree shapes become ever more gentle and softly rounded.

Susumu Endo,
forest medical trainer



Check Your Clothes Winter Style



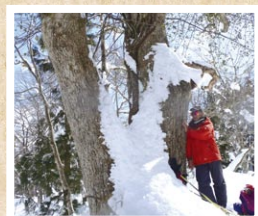
For footwear, we suggest boots, snow boots, or snowboarding soft boots, with which you can keep yourself warm and easily walk on snow.

A recommended winter course kyoboku no Mori (Forest of Big Trees) Course

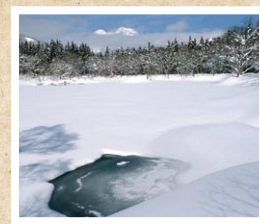
The forest in winter is carpeted with snow, allowing you to trek into nooks and places which are usually not accessible. With snowshoes, it is possible to enjoy sights totally different from other seasons. The Kyoboku no Mori Course, which is accessible only in winter, is bound to be unforgettable. After alighting from a ski lift, snowshoe downhill into the forest! Big trees that you usually cannot encounter welcome you.



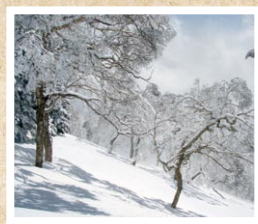
Tea time in the snowy forest. Handmade sweets and a cup of herbs tea make the break time even more enjoyable.



Why not stand by a "friendly" tree in the quiet forest and feel the warmth of Mother Nature?



The frozen Ojika-ike Pond, but please take care! The ice is too thin to walk on it.



Trees in the forest are decorated with plenty of snow, but are preparing for the arrival of spring.



OP Nature skiing

Once you have come to feel at home in the snowy forest, won't you try ski walking? Sliding while walking is a gratifying experience.



OP Making a kamakura (snow hut)

Inside a kamakura (snow hut), it's warmer than expected. Create your own cozy world by lighting an aroma candle in the kamakura.

Healing Forest Lodging facilities

There are currently 25 town-authorized Healing Forest Lodging facilities. Various types of lodgings are available. They include hotels, traditional Japanese-style inns and pensions. Choose the one best suited for your individual needs. Lodgings offer the following services:

- Welcome herb tea and medicinal herb tea upon guest arrival
- Aroma bathing and other aroma-based positive enhancement experiences
- Provision of a quiet environment
- Positive enhancement by taking advantage of the sounds of nature
- Creatively prepared meals based on traditional local cuisine
- Shuttle service to the station, Healing Forest courses and hot-spring facilities
- Night sky watching, night walks and other programs (at additional charge)



"Please enjoy our creative hospitality and a true relaxation in our facility."



Hiroshi Mizuno,
a Healing Forest
Lodging owner

Healing Forest Bento (Box Lunch)

These include the "Healthy Bento" prepared by local women who make their own handmade tofu (soybean curd) and stick only to locally produced ingredients, as well as the "Macrobi Lunch" based on macrobiotic nutrition. Incorporating elements of our traditional local cuisine and by sticking to locally produced ingredients, each of these lunch boxes is friendly to both your body and soul.



Meals Served in Lodgings

The lodgings cater to their guests with locally produced, morning-harvested ingredients, such as vegetables, mountain greens and mushrooms. Considerations are also given to those guests who may be suffering from an allergy or disease. Some facilities can even offer traditional medicinal meals and/or calorie-controlled meals. Please do not hesitate to check with your lodging facility.



Vegetable Sweets

"Shinano Vegi Taberu Sweets,"

Shinano-machi takes advantage of its superb natural environment, specifically its clean air and clear water to produce a diverse range of local vegetables. Typical farm products include corn, buckwheat for soba noodles, rhubarb and "botagosho" (a kind of pepper designated Nagano's traditional vegetable). Development of sweets and delicacies using these vegetables is in progress by local volunteers. The creation of such vegetable-based sweets is part of "Healing by Hands-on Experiences" among other "Healing Forest" programs.

- "Shinano Vegi Taberu Sweets,"

sweets based on such vegetables are available for sale at the "Furusato Tembo-kan" highway oasis and other outlets.



"Corn Balls"



"Botagosho" roll cake



Shinano-machi tarts
and "Mon-soban"