

# GIFU

Timeless Japan,  
Naturally an Adventure

When you gaze at a fearsome samurai sword in a Tokyo museum, or admire an elegant paper screen in a Kyoto teahouse, you're probably looking at the fruits of Gifu's labour. Here, you can learn about the everyday lives and wisdom of ordinary people. It's the ideal destination for curious travellers who want to dig a little deeper, to discover the wellspring of Japan's rich culture.

A visit to the mountains and rivers of this green prefecture in the heart of Japan is both a step back in time and a glimpse of a more sustainable future. Come to see traditional crafts still practised by master artisans, explore forests and castle towns untouched by time, and experience ancient ways of living in harmony with nature which are today more relevant than ever.

## Gifu: Timeless Japan, Naturally an Adventure

Immerse yourself in the grand outdoors, timeless tradition and living culture here that have been preserved and lovingly passed down the generations. A trip to Gifu is naturally an adventure.



# The Grand Outdoors

In Gifu, the outdoors is not only great – it's grand. From the soaring, snow-dusted peaks of the Japan Alps to sparklingly clear rivers and deep forests, the natural world is the soul of this region. For generations, the locals have lived by the idea of *satoyama* – working with nature rather than against it, to keep balance and harmony. Those sustainable practices are still woven into daily life today.

Travellers in Gifu can reap the rewards of this careful protection of the environment. Experience Gifu's grand outdoors for yourself by cycling alongside rippling rice paddies, trekking through sun-dappled forests, snowshoeing in the mountains, and soothing your aching muscles in steaming hot springs.



# Timeless Tradition

Gifu's slow pace of life nurtures the painstaking work of artisans, who practise their centuries-old crafts with passion and dedication. You can try your hand at many of these – papermaking, indigo dyeing, woodcraft, ceramics, and even swordsmithing – under the patient tutelage of a master of the craft.

You can also experience practices passed down through the generations, admiring the 1300-year-old art of cormorant fishing by torchlight on a balmy summer evening, or being entertained by a *ji-kabuki* play at a festival. This version of Japan's bright, brilliant theatre tradition is performed by amateurs, originally farmers who were inspired by professional actors from the capital, and Gifu still has over 30 troupes – more than any other prefecture.



# Living Culture

In Gifu, the knowledge and aspirations of the previous generations is still alive, and part of day-to-day life. Traditional homes are still used as residences, not simply as museums, from the steep-roofed thatched *gassho-zukuri* farmhouses of Shirakawa-go to the finely worked wooden townhouses of Takayama. Travellers can stay in traditional houses, eating dinner around the *irori* hearth and sleeping beneath the wide wooden eaves, experiencing a way of life stretching back for centuries.

You can also walk in the footsteps of the pilgrims, lords and everyday people who followed the ancient Nakasendo highway, soak up the atmosphere of UNESCO-listed festivals, and pick up food and local crafts at lively local markets or directly from the workshops of artisans.

