

Only  
45 Mins  
from  
Nara City

# Uda City

T r a v e l G u i d e

Discover Uda, a Land of Mysterious and Ancient Reminders of Japan's Past.



宇陀なら、ある。

Uda nara aru



# 又兵衛桜

## **Matabei Zakura (Matabei Cherry Blossom)**

This huge weeping cherry tree is named after Matabei Goto, a military commander in the Sengoku period (15th -16th century). Estimated to be about 300 years old, this ancient tree has a trunk circumference of over 3 meters and a height of 13 meters. In spring, a great number of visitors from all over Japan flock to Ouda to see this iconic cherry tree.



## Sennen Zakura (Sennen Cherry Blossom) at Butsuryu-ji Temple

At the entrance of Butsuryu-ji Temple lies a huge cherry tree called 'Sennen Zakura', which is estimated to be 900 years old. This is the oldest cherry tree in Nara Prefecture.

仏  
隆  
寺



# 水分神社

## Udano Mikumari Shrine

Built in the Kamakura period (12th-13th century), the main shrine building has been designated as a national treasure. Within the grounds of the shrine stands a giant cedar tree called 'The Couple's Cedar', which is a symbol of marital harmony.



# 油屋

## Historic Inn 'Aburaya'

This 300-year-old historic inn remains exactly as it used to be in the Edo period. Its surrounding area flourished as a post station town, as it was located at the diverging point of two pilgrimage roads: 'Ise-Honkaido' and 'Hase-Kaido'.



# 龍穴神社



## Ryuketsu Shrine

This sacred shrine is one of the most spiritual and mysterious spots in Uda City. Once you enter the shrine grounds, you will feel the change in atmosphere. The Dragon Deity, which is the god of water, is enshrined here. In the back of the shrine lies 'Kissho Ryuketsu' (dragon's cave), where dragons are believed to live.

# 芸術の森



## Muro Art Forest

This open-air museum lies deep within the village of Muro. It was built by Israeli artist Dani Karavan in 2006, based on the idea by Bukichi Inoue (1930-1997), a sculptor who was from the village. Each monument created by Dani shows the theme of this museum, 'Harmony with Nature and Art'. It is quite a nice place to stop for a moment and relax.



## About Uda City

Uda City is located in the Yamato Plateau in northeastern Nara Prefecture, and consists of four areas; Haibara, Ouda, Utano, and Muro, each with its own history. Compared to other areas in Nara Prefecture, Uda is cooler in the summer and colder in the winter. The official flower of the city is Lily of the Valley, and the official bird is a bush warbler.



## A Quaint Historic Town Where Traditions Remain Unchanged

Uda is a very historic city, whose name has existed since the Manyo era (8th century). In the oldest existing collection of Japanese poetry called Manyo-shu, there is a poem composed by Hitomaro Kakinomoto, one of the greatest poets in the Asuka Period (7-8th century). "Over the eastern field I see the morning glow before sunrise, and when I turn around, I see the setting moon". This was written in Akino, Ouda in Uda City. An annual event called 'Kagiroi Viewing' is held on November 17th in the old Chinese calendar. People gather at Manyo Park in the early morning wishing to see the rare natural phenomenon called 'Kagiroi', just like people did in the ancient past.



## The Place to Get Away from It All.

Looking back on history, Uda has been a destination for people who wanted to escape from something in life: Seiren-ji (map<sup>15</sup>) was a refuge for Princess Chujo, a legendary tragic princess in the 8th century who had been abused by her step-mother; and Muro-ji (map<sup>9</sup>) was open to female worshippers, unlike 'Koyasan' and many other temples of that time. (Which is why Muro-ji is called 'Women's Koya'). Even today, Uda City welcomes anyone who wants to escape from the bustle of everyday life. Rich in history and nature, Uda City has so much to offer. It is a perfect place for visitors to experience the beautiful countryside of Japan!



Rice fields in Todachi



Kagiroi viewing



Torimiyama Park



Seiren-ji



Un-kai (Viewd from Torimiyama)

### 1.Sumisaka Shrine 【map ①】



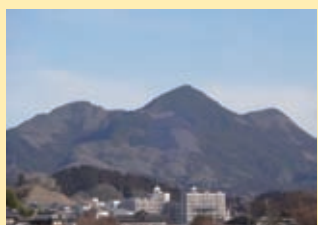
This shrine is believed to be Japan's oldest shrine whose enshrined deity is the god of health. According to Japan's oldest existing historical texts 'the Kojiki' and 'Nihon Shoki', this ancient shrine was built by Emperor Sujin during his reign (97 BC - 30 BC) to control an epidemic that was spreading across his empire.

### 2.Torimiyama Park 【map ②】



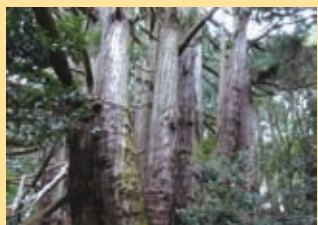
Throughout the year, there is always something to see in this natural park: thousands of azaleas in early summer and stunning autumn foliage. The observatory offers a panoramic view of the Yamato Plateau and Uda City. Brimming with picturesque charm, this park attracts hikers and photographers in every season.

### 3.Mt. Yamato-Fuji 【map ③】



Mt. Nukai, also called 'Mt. Yamato-Fuji', has been selected as one of the 100 great mountains in the Kansai region. The shape of the mountain looks exactly like the kanji '山' that stands for 'mountain'. The annual climbing event is held in February.

### 4.Takai 'Senbon-sugi' Cedar 【map ④】

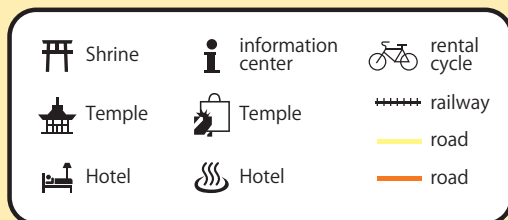


This giant cedar, located along the Ise Pilgrimage Road, used to be individual trees whose trunks have connected with each other, and over a long period of time, made one big tree that looks like a cedar forest. It has been designated as a Natural Monument by Nara Prefecture.

### 5.Takayama Ukon Statue/ Sawa Castle Ruins 【map ⑤】



Sawa Castle was built in the Shohei era (1346-1370) as the headquarters for the Sawa Family who ruled Uda area at that time. A well-known Christian 'daimyo' (feudal clan lord) Takayama Ukon lived in Sawa Castle during his childhood while his father was the lord of the castle, and he was baptized there at the age of 12. There is a statue of Ukon near the castle ruin.



North

榛原

⑥ Matsuyama Area

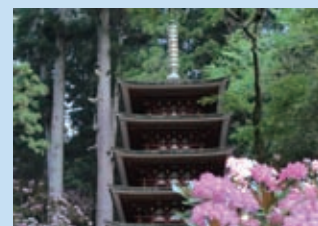






### 1. Muro-ji Temple [map ⑥]

Muro-ji is called 'Women's Koya', because the temple welcomed female worshippers, in contrast to Koyasan, where only men were admitted for Buddhist training. The five-storied pagoda, which is the smallest outdoor pagoda in Japan, has been designated as a national treasure. Muro-ji is also well-known for its rhododendrons in early May and autumn foliage.



### 2. Ono-ji Temple [map ⑦]

This temple is known for its two 300-year-old weeping cherry trees that bloom in spring. Across the River Uda in front of the temple stands the huge Magaibutsu (13.8m high), which is one of Japan's biggest Buddha statues carved into the rock. This is believed to have been built in the Kamakura period (12 - 13th century).



### 3. Fukano Village [map ⑧]

With its beautiful terraced rice fields, Fukano Village has been selected as one of Japan's 100 mountain villages. Fukano is known for 'Sasayuri' (bamboo lily), an endangered species of lilies that have been protected by the locals.



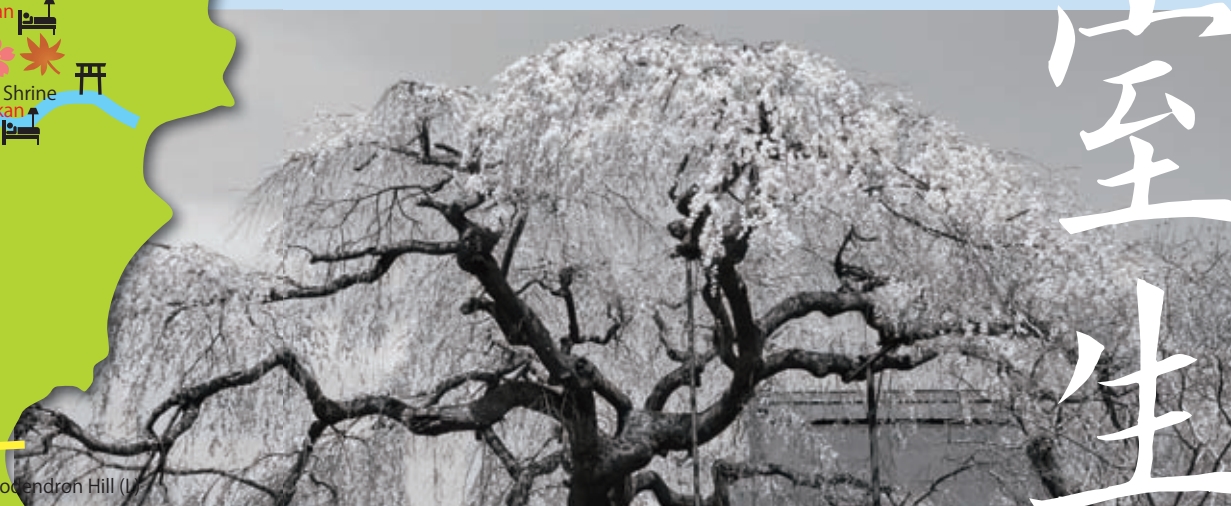
### 4. Takidani Iris Garden [map ⑨]

Throughout the year, this huge garden has so much to offer: irises, cherry blossoms and moss phlox in spring, clematis, irises, and hydrangeas in early summer. Blueberry picking can also be enjoyed in summer.



### 5. Benzaiten Shakunage Hill [map ⑩]

Located deep in the village of Muro, this rhododendron hill has ten thousand rhododendron bushes that surround the Konpira Shrine. These rhododendrons were originally planted by the locals who wished to revitalize the village that had been suffering from depopulation.



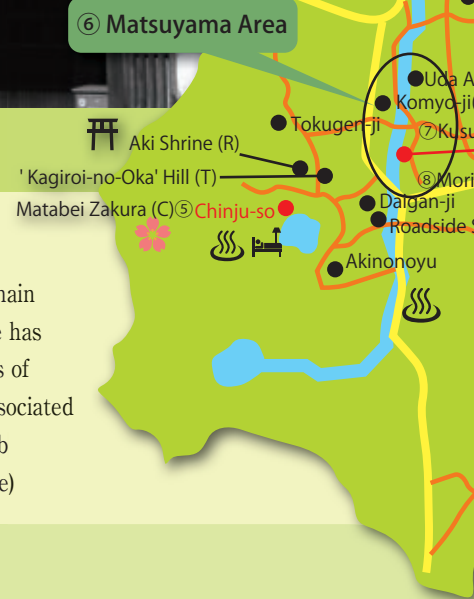
# 大宇陀

**Ouda** *Ouda-The Quaint Historic Town and Birthplace of Modern Medicine in Japan.*

## 1.Uda-Matsuyama, a Historic Townscape 【map ⑪】



Developed as a castle town, this area has many historic buildings that remain unchanged since the Edo period (16th -18th century). This retro landscape has been designated as one of the Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Historic Buildings. Known as a medical town, the streets have facilities associated with medicines and herbs, including 'Morino Kyuyakuen' (Medicinal Herb Garden), and 'Kusuri-no-Yakata' (Uda City Historical Museum of Medicine)



## 2.Akino Hitomaro Park 【map ⑫】



This park is named after the old name for this area, 'Akino'; combined with a famous poet in the Manyo era (8th century), 'Kakinomoto-no-Hitomaro' who is believed to have read a poem in the area. In the park stands a statue of him and the replica of the ancient buildings (one pit dwelling house and two ancient houses supported by earthfast posts) which remind us of those times. After the excavation conducted by the town in 1995, this area was found to be an important location for the imperial family's 'medicinal hunting'.

## 3.Uda Animal Park 【map ⑬】



This free animal park is a nice family-friendly destination where you can get close to and learn about many different species of animals. Petting and interacting with them is fun. You can also try feeding some of the animals, milking a cow and riding a pony. The park offers lots of playground equipment for kids to enjoy.

## 4.Morino Medicinal Herb Garden 【map ⑭】



This is one of Japan's oldest private medicinal herb gardens, which was first opened in 1729 by Tosuke Morino, the 11th-generation owner of the old-established 'kuzu' (arrow-root starch) manufacturer, 'Morino Yoshino-Kuzu Honpo'. About 250 kinds of herbs grow in the garden throughout the year, including 'Katakuri' or Dog's Tooth Violet. The whole town of Uda-Matsuyama can be viewed from the garden.

## 5.Aki Shrine 【map ⑮】



Amaterasu, the goddess of the sun, is enshrined here. The main hall is made in the same style as Ise Shrine. Within the shrine grounds, there is a stage for Noh theater performances. Noh was performed here from the Edo period until the Taisho period (1912-1926). In 1992, it was revived as 'Akino-Horaru Noh' and is held in June every year. The highlight of this event is releasing fireflies ('hotaru') in the dark during the performances. You can experience the subtle and profound beauty of Noh.

**South**

Haibara Station

# 菟田野



## Utano *Utano-Where Ancient Mythology Is Still Alive.*

### 1. Mikumari Zakura (Row of cherry blossom trees) 【map 16】

A hundred cherry trees lie along the riverbank of Hono River for about 500 m, which is quite a sight. These cherry trees look even more beautiful when lit up with lanterns at night, offering an amazing view of the trees reflected on the river.



### 2. World Maple Park 'Hirara' 【map 17】

'World Maple Park' has over 3000 maple trees with 1200 different species from around the world. A beautifully restored old schoolhouse is now used as a library, café, and art studio. These maple trees look most beautiful in early summer, when the trees start to burst into leaves.



### 3. The Buddha Stone Statues on Mt. Hirai-Taishi 【map 18】

There are about 100 Buddha statues standing on Mt. Taishi, 88 of which are imitations of statues at the temples for the Shikoku 88 Pilgrimage. These statues were created by a well-known stonemason Tamba-no-Sakichi and his apprentices in the late Edo period. The locals who could not travel all the way to Shikoku visited this place instead as a substitute pilgrimage.



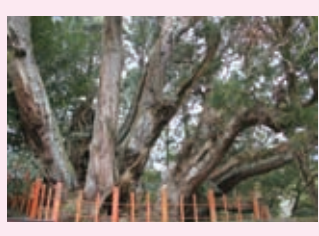
### 4. Hibariyama Seiren-ji 【map 19】

Located deep within the mountain in Utano, this isolated nunnery temple is associated with the tragic Princess Chujo, who was abused and nearly killed by her stepmother in the Nara period (8th century). This temple offers a tranquil and feminine atmosphere with many kinds of flowers blooming from season to season, which feels as if Princess Chujo is still there. This is a perfect place to get away from the bustle of everyday life, or stop for a moment to reflect.



### 5. 'Yatsufusa-Sugi' Cedar 【map 20】

Inside the Sakurami Shrine stands a huge old cedar (estimated to be about 2000 years old!) which is believed to have been planted by Emperor Jimmu, the first emperor of Japan. He planted it when he set up camp during an eastern expedition to conquer the Yamato (Nara) area. Eight trunks growing out of one stock and intertangling one another is truly amazing. 'Yatsufusa-Sugi' was designated as a National Natural Treasure in 1932.






area

# Flower Calendar

**Ume**  
(plum blossom)

Komyo-ji  
(map: A)

Seiren-ji  
(map: B)



Ume

**Sakura**  
(cherry blossom)

Matabei Zakura (map: C)

Mikumari Zakura (map: D)

Butsuryu-ji (map: E)

Torimiyama Park (map: F)

Goshin-ji (map: G)

Saiko-ji (map: H)

Ono-ji (map: I)

**Katakuri**  
(dog's tooth violet)

Morino Medicinal Herb  
Garden (map: J)

**Shakunage**  
(rhododendron)

Muro-ji  
(map: K)

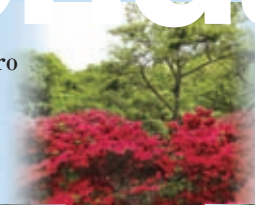
Benzaiten Hill  
(map: L)

**Tsutsuji**  
(azalea)

Torimiyama Park  
(map: F)

**Sasayuri**  
(bamboo lily)

Fukano, Muro  
(map: N)



Tsutsuji



Sasayuri



Sakura



Suzuran



Sasayuri

**Suzuran**  
(Lily of the Valley)

Mukoji, Muro  
(map: N)

★ For each location, see the map on the back page.

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug



## Azalea Festival

Torimiyama Park looks amazing in May, filled with vivid azaleas. The festival is to celebrate the beginning of the climbing season, and to pray for the safety of hikers.

Location:  
Torimiyama Park (map: F)



## Akino Hotaru Noh

Noh is performed at the Noh stage located within the shrine. 'Hotaru' (fireflies) will be released from the stage during the performances, which is quite a sight.

Location:  
Aki Shrine®



## Haibara Fireworks

This is the biggest firework festival in Nara Prefecture, with about 4200 fireworks launched. As the site is surrounded with mountains, the sounds of fireworks echo through the mountains.

Location:  
around Uda River

# Even Calendar

## Hiking Trails in Uda City



### Muro-Kodo Trail (total length: approx. 12.1 km)

Passing through Butsuryu-ji, known for its 900-year-old cherry tree; Karato Pass, which offers a great view from the mountain; Saiko-ji, an ancient temple with a weeping cherr tree, and Muro-ji, an ancient temple full of national treasures. Spring and autumn are the best times to hike.

### Tokai Nature Trail (total : approx. 6.5km)

This family-friendly hiking trail passes through Ono-ji, where weeping cherry trees and 'Magaibutsu' (a huge Buddha statue carved on the rock) are worth a see; Muro Art Forest, an open-air museum where Israeli sculptor Dani Karavan's artworks lie; and Muro-ji.

### Taishi-no-Michi Trail (total : approx. 6.5km)

This trail used to be a popular pilgrimage to Muro-ji; many people walked this trail on each anniversary day (21th) of Kobo Taishi's death. Takidani Iris Garden offers many species of flowers in every season. Ryuketsu Shrine has longer history than Muro-ji, and it enshrines the water god

**Higanbana**  
(cluster amaryllis)



Higanbana

Butsuryu-ji  
(map: E)



Kouyou

**Kouyou**  
(autumn foliage)

World Maple Park (map: O)

Muro-ji (map: K)

Torimiyama Park (map: F)

Kaicho-ji (map: P)



*Spt*

*Oct*

*Nov*

*Dec*

*Jan*

*Feb*



**Utano Autumn Festival**

This is a romantic festival, in which the goddess from Soja Mikumari Shrine makes a long procession to meet her husband god at Uta Mikumari Shrine. The parade of six Taikodai (float to carry drums on) is worth a see.

**Location:**  
Uta Mikumari Shrine (map: S)

**Haibara Hagiakari**

Candles illuminate the historic town-scape of Haibara in the evening, which creates a tranquil atmosphere. The competitive performances of four 'Taikodai' is held on the following day.

**Location:**  
around Haibara Station

**Kagiroi**

'Kagiroi' is a rare natural phenomenon that can be seen early winter morning, about one hour before sunrise, only when the weather condition is right. On November 17th in the old calendar, people gather at 'Kagiroi-no-Oka' Hill around 4 a.m., wishing to see the 'Kagiroi' appearing in the eastern sky, just like people did in the ancient past.



**Mt. Yamato-Fuji Climb**

Mt. Nukai, also call-ed Mt. Yamato-Fuji, has been selected as one of 100 great mountains in Kansai region. This annual climbing event will be held on the closest Sunday to the Mt. Fuji Anniver-sary (Feb 23rd).

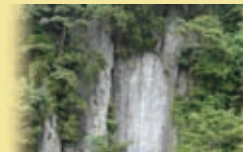
**Location:**  
Mt. Nukai (map: Q)



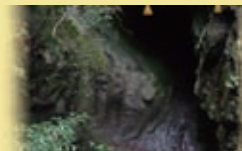
Haibara Station ▶ 15min bus ride Bus stop Takami 2km ▶ Butsuryu-ji ▶ 0.9km ▶ Karato Pass ▶ 3.3km ▶ Saiko-ji ▶ 1.5km ▶ Muro-ji



Muroguchi-Ono Station ▶ 0.5km ▶ Ono-ji ▶ 4.2km ▶ Muro Art Forest ▶ 1.3km ▶ Muro-ji



Sambommatsu Station ▶ 2.4km ▶ Takidani Iris Garden ▶ 5.3km ▶ Muro-ji ▶ 0.8km ▶ Ryuketsu Shrine



**Local Specialty Fur and Leather Products**

Utano area, situated in the southeast of Uda City, is well-known for fur and leather products.

# Accommodations & Hotsprings



## Sasayuri-Ann

*type:* **Guest House**

*Credit Card:* **Visa, Master, Amex, Diners, JCB, Toyoya Card**

*wifi:* **Yes**

*English speaking:* **Yes**

Website: <http://stayjapan.jp>  
address: 656 Fukano, Muro, Uda 632-0203



## B&B Nishimine

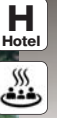
*type:* **B&B**

*Credit Card:* **No**

*wifi:* **Yes**

*English speaking:* **Yes**

Website: <http://mime1903.wixsite.com/bandb-nishimine>  
address: 513 Nishitani, Muro, Uda 633-0312



## Miharu-en

*type:* **Hotel**

*Credit Card:* **Visa, Master CARD, DC**

*wifi:* **No**

*English speaking:* **No**

Website: <http://www.qkamura-s.com/miharu-en/>  
address: 255 Fukuchi, Haibara, Uda 633-0204



## Imasakaya

*type:* **Ryokan**

*Credit Card:* **No**

*wifi:* **Yes**

*English speaking:* **No**

Website: <http://imasakaya.com/>  
address: 1975 Nakashin, Ouda, Uda 633-2175



## Hashimotoya Ryokan

*type:* **Ryokan**

*Credit Card:* **No**

*wifi:* **No**

*English speaking:* **No**

Website: <http://www.hashimotoya-uda.jp/>  
address: 800Muro, Uda 663-0421



## Chinju-sou

*type:* **Hotel**

*Credit Card:* **No**

*wifi:* **Yes**

*English speaking:* **No**

Website: <http://www.chinjusou.jp/>  
address: 267 Hongo, Ouda, Uda 633-2156

【Ryokan】 (Japanese-style Inn)



## Laputa Uda

*type:* **Guest House**

*Credit Card:* **No**

*wifi:* **Yes**

*English speaking:* **No**

Website: <http://www.qkamura-s.com/miharu-en/>  
address: 255 Fukuchi, Haibara, Uda 633-0204



## Minshuku Muro

*type:* **Guest House**

*Credit Card:* **No**

*wifi:* **Yes (dining room only)**

*English speaking:* **No**

Website: <http://www.e-murou.com/>  
address: 405-1 Muro, Uda 633-0421



## Akino-no-yu

*type:* **Hotspring only for day-trippers**

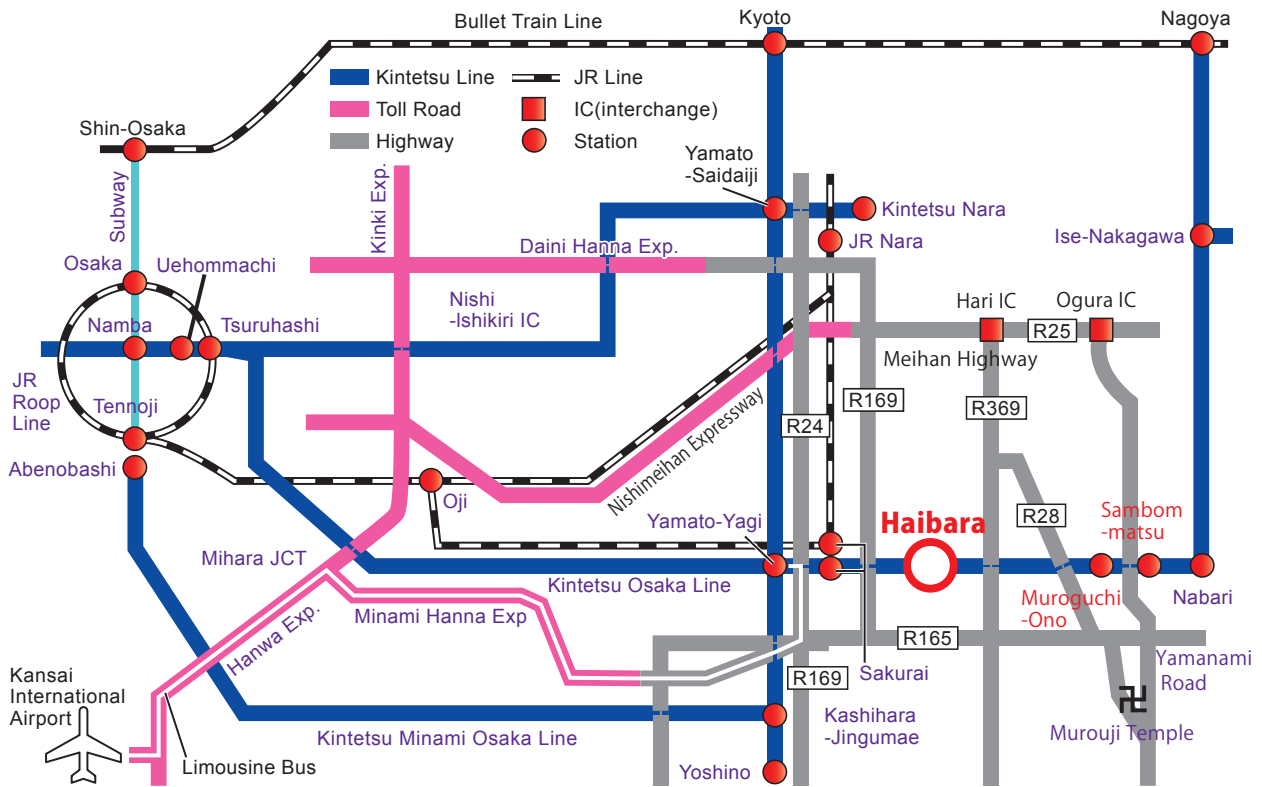
*Credit Card:* **?**

*wifi:* **Yes (Softbank only)**

*English speaking:* **Yes (using app)**

Website: <http://akinonoyu.com/>  
address: 250-2 Hiroo, Ouda, Uda 633-2164

# Access



## By Train The nearest stations are Haibara Station(D-45), Muroguchi-Ono Station(D-46), or Sambommatsu Station(D-47).

### ● From Kansai International Airport (Time: approx.. 90 minutes)

Kansai International Airport → (Kansai-Airport Limousine Bus) → Kintetsu Yamato-Yagi Station(D-39) → (Kintetsu Osaka Line, Express (Kyuko) to either Aoyamacho, Nabari, or Isuzugawa) → Kintetsu Haibara Station(D-45)

### ● From Osaka (Time: approx.. 70 minutes)

JR Osaka Station → (JR Osaka Loop Line) → JR Tsuruhashi Station → (Change trains, 1min. walk) → Kintetsu Tsuruhashi Station(A-04) → (Kintetsu Osaka Line, Express to either Aoyamacho, Nabari, and Isuzugawa) → Kintetsu Haibara Station(D-45)

### ● From Kyoto (Time: approx. 120 minutes)

Kintetsu Kyoto Station(B-01) → (Kintetsu Kyoto Line, Express (Kyuko) to Kashiharajingu-mae) → Kintetsu Yamato-Saidaiji Station(B-26) → (Kintetsu Kashihara Line, Express to Kashiharajingu-mae) → Kintetsu Yamato-Yagi Station(D-39) → (Kintetsu Osaka Line, Express to either Aoyamacho, Nabari, or Isuzugawa) → Kintetsu Haibara Station(D-45)

### ● From Nagoya (Time: approx. 105 minutes)

Kintetsu Nagoya Station(E-01) → (Limited Express to Kashikojima) → Kintetsu Ise-Nakagawa Station(D-61) → (Limited Express to Osaka Namba) → Kintetsu Haibara Station(D-45)

### ● From Nara (Time: approx.. 65 minutes)

JR Nara Station → (Train to either Wakayama or Oji) → JR Sakurai Station/Kintetsu Sakurai Station → (Change Trains to Kintetsu Osaka Line, Express to either Haibara, Aoyamacho, or Nabari) → Kintetsu Haibara Station(D-45)

## By Car

### ● From Osaka, Kyoto, and Nagoya (Time: approx.. 1 hour from Osaka, 2 hours from Kyoto and Nagoya)

Meihan National Route → Hari IC → Route 369

### ● From Nara (Time: approx.. 45 minutes)

Route 165 → Route 166 → Uda City



宇陀なら、ある。

Uda nara aru

*Uda City*  
T r a v e l G u i d e