

Warm Your Body and Soul in an Onsen!

Have you ever visited an onsen? What actually *is* an onsen?

A lot of people from overseas tend to think that an onsen is a facility with a large bath where a lot of people can bathe together, but actually, “onsen” does not mean “communal bath.” An onsen is a hot spring, where water in the ground is over 25 degrees, and usually contains minerals, and/or particular substances such as vapor, lithium ions or radon. There are many onsen all over Miyazaki, which are popular with visitors looking to warm up their bodies and souls. How about experiencing a bit of Japanese culture and interacting with local people at an onsen?

A Few Things to Bear in Mind When Bathing at an Onsen:

1 – Don’t forget to take off all your clothes, including underwear, jewelry and other accessories

2 – Wash yourself before getting into the bath.

3 – When using the showers to wash yourself, be careful not to splash hot water over the people around you.

4 – Do not wash yourself in the main bathtub.

5 – Do not put your towel in the water in the main bathtub.

6 – If you have long hair, make sure to tie it up so that it doesn’t get into the water and bathtub.

7 – Don’t run around or make a lot of noise.

8 – Make sure to dry yourself properly after getting out of the bath.

9 – Be careful to stay hydrated and take a break before and after bathing – if you feel unwell, don’t get in the bath.

10 – Some people with delicate skin might get a rash from some of the minerals in the onsen, so it might be a good idea to shower again after getting out of the bath.



Tattoos:

As a general rule, a lot of onsen in Japan refuse entry to people with tattoos. However, as opposed to traditional beliefs, in recent years, more and more people are getting tattoos for fashion reasons, and so there is a movement to rethink the “No Tattoos” rules at onsen. Even if tattoos are prohibited in the large main bath, it might be possible to use private baths in separate rooms or to hire out an onsen. If you have any doubts, make sure to get in touch with the onsen you plan to visit and ask them beforehand.

There are also plenty of onsen in Miyazaki that you can visit as a day trip. Make sure to check the place you plan to visit in advance to find out when they are open and how much it costs to bathe there.

Sightseeing and Travel Information for Miyazaki:

You can find a lot of sightseeing and travel information for Miyazaki Prefecture on the Miyazaki Prefecture Tourism Association's website "The Official Miyazaki Prefecture Travel Guide," at <http://www.kanko-miyazaki.jp/index.html>

(Available in Japanese, English, Simplified & Traditional Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, Thai and Malay).

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about this column, please contact the Miyazaki International Foundation:

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