

# **The Seino Guide**

***2016 - 2017***

**The guide to (most) things Seino for the JET community.**



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## Acknowledgements

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As much as we would like this work to be the definitive guide to Seino, we realize that it would be impossible and unreasonable to create such a guide. Please make considerable use of this compilation, but know that there is so much more out there than what is represented here.

Do not be afraid to ask fellow JETs, coworkers, neighbors, or even random strangers for help or information. Despite what language barriers there might be, whomever you ask is likely to help you as much as possible. If they are unable to help, they'll probably direct you to someone who can.

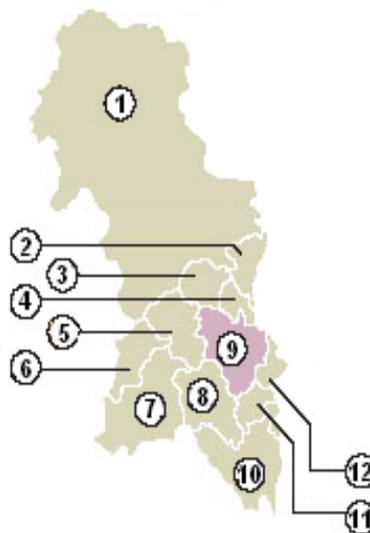
And of course, your friendly RPAs are always here to help.

-Denton Williams and Thomas Black

## Where Am I?



1. Ibigawa Town
2. Ono Town
3. Ikeda Town
4. Godo Town
5. Tarui Town
6. Sekigahara Town
7. Kamishizu Town
8. Yoro Town
9. Ogaki City
10. Kaizu City
11. Wanouchi Town
12. Anpachi Town



### Where are the JETs at?

- Ogaki: 1 ALTs, 1 CIR
- Wanouchi: 1 ALT
- Ibigawa: 1 ALT
- Yoro: 3 ALTs
- Sekigahara: 1 ALT

## 西濃地区 Seino-chiku

Gifu Prefecture is comprised of five regions: *Hida*, *Tono*, *Chuno*, *Gifu*, and *Seino*. The southern half of Gifu was once called *Mino*, while the northern half has been called *Hida* since time immemorial, or so we are led to believe. The name *Mino* (美濃) accounts for the “no” in the names *Seino* (西濃), *Chuno* (中濃) and *Tono* (東濃), while *sei* means *west*, *chu* means *middle*, and *to* means *east*.

As its name implies, Seino is the most western edge of Gifu Prefecture. It contains the site of a historically significant battle, was traversed by the famous *Nakasendo* trade route, and is known to this day for water: high water tables, flooding, and tasty potable water.

Seino is comprised of 21 smaller regions. From furthest north to south:

<u>Kanji</u>	<u>Hirigana</u>	<u>Romaji</u>
藤橋村	ふじはしむら	Fujihashi-mura
坂内村	さかうちむら	Sakauchi-mura
久瀬村	くぜむら	Kuze-mura
谷汲村	たにぐみむら	Tanigumi-mura
揖斐川町	いびがわちょう	Ibigawa-cho
春日村	かすがむら	Kasuga-mura
大野町	おおのちょう	Ono-cho
池田町	いけだちょう	Ikeda-cho
神戸町	ごうどちょう	Godo-cho
垂井町	たるいちょう	Tarui-cho
赤坂町	あかさかちょう	Akasaka-cho
関ヶ原町	せきがはらちょう	Sekigahara-cho
大垣市	おおがきし	Ogaki-shi
墨俣町	すのまたちょう	Sunomata-cho
安八町	あんぱちちょう	Anpachi-cho
上石津町	かみいしづちょう	Kamiishizu-cho
養老町	ようろうちょう	Yoro-cho
輪之内町	わのうちちょう	Wanouchi-cho
平田町	ひらたちょう	Hirata-cho
南濃町	なんのうちょう	Nanno-cho
海津町	かいづちょう	Kaizu-cho

Note: Many of these townships have consolidated and so are technically under a different city name (市-shi), but still use the same town names (町-cho).

# Transportation

## **Train**

Ogaki Station is the main train station in Seino. From there you can take trains all over Seino, Gifu, and other prefectures.

- Tokkaido Line:
  - Ogaki to Toyohashi (appx 90 mins)
    - ◇ Stopping at Nishi-Gifu Station (appx 8 mins)
    - ◇ Stopping at Gifu Station (appx 11 mins)
    - ◇ Stopping at Nagoya Station (appx 32 mins)
- Tokkaido Line:
  - Ogaki to Maibara (appx 35 mins)
    - ◇ Stopping at Sekigahara (appx 14 mins)
- Tokaido Mino-Akasaka Line:
  - Mino-Akasaka to Ogaki (appx 7 mins)
- Yoro Railway:
  - Ogaki to Kuwana (appx 70 mins)
    - ◇ Stopping at Yoro (appx 22 mins)
- Yoro Railway
  - Ogaki to Ibi (appx 24 mins)
- Tarumi Line: (Will not accept IC cards, pay on the train)
  - Ogaki to Tarumi Station in Neo (appx 65 mins)
    - ◇ Stopping at Morera-Gifu (Malera) in Motosu (appx 21 mins)

## **Shinkansen**

Though the Shinkansen goes through Seino, there is not a stop. To go North or West of Gifu by Shinkansen, head to Maibara by the JR Tokaido Line to Maibara (35 mins). For the Shinkansen East of Gifu, head to Nagoya Station by JR Tokaido Line to Toyohashi (32 mins)

## **Shuttle Ticket**

Round trip discount ticket package (includes Shinkansen as well as regular rail tickets)

Purchase at: Ogaki Station, Tarui Station, Sekigahara Station

## **Bus:**

Buses run both around Ogaki, and to other towns and cities in Seino. The primary bus hub is outside of Ogaki Station. Many buses to towns outside Ogaki run fairly infrequently.

## **Plane:**

Chubu Centrair International Airport in Nagoya. By Local Trains, it takes about 100 mins to get to the airport from Ogaki Station.

## **Websites and Applications**

- Hyperdia: [www.hyperdia.com](http://www.hyperdia.com) The application is about 2500¥/ year (English and Japanese)
- Gifu Bus: [www.gifubus.co.jp/noriai](http://www.gifubus.co.jp/noriai) (PDFs of bus timetables, Japanese)
- Gifu Bus: [www.navi.gifubus.co.jp](http://www.navi.gifubus.co.jp) (Bus navigation, Japanese bus stop kanji necessary to use)

## Inside Seino

### 藤橋村 **Fujihashi-mura (incorporated with Ibigawa-cho in 2005)**

#### What to do/ see:

- Fujihashi-mura is home to an observatory, and it's a fairly modest-sized one at that. The Fujihashi Castle houses the Nishimino Planetarium, as well as a small historical exhibit.

### 谷汲村 **Tanigumi-mura (incorporated with Ibigawa-cho in 2005)**

This tiny mountain village north of Ogaki is great for an afternoon outing.

#### What to do/see:

- Fall foliage
- Tanigumi Main Temple: The temple has a 'key' kept in the darkness under the temple. It is said that if you ventures down through the dark path underneath and touch the 'key' you will have good luck.
- Tanigumi-san Temple complex featuring Japan's only mummy.

### 揖斐川町 **Ibigawa-cho**

With its many rivers, Ibi is known for ayu fishing in the summer. Along the rivers there are little stalls that locals set up to prepare the sweet fish fresh. From Ogaki Station take the Yoro Tesudo-Ibi Line to Ibi Station (Appx 24 mins)

#### What to do/see:

- Yashaga-ike, legendary pond, located at the top of a nice hike in Sakauchi-mura.

#### Where to eat:

- Ban Rai Ramen. From the main road at the station, turn right and walk north. Look for a big yellow sign with red kanji.

### 大野町 **Ono-cho**

Ono-cho is just adjacent to Ikeda and Ibi. It looks similar to the other towns with its many stores mixed into rice fields and houses.

#### What to do/see:

- *Ono Rose Park* – The highest yielding rose nursery in Japn, accounting for 60% of national production. Ono rose breeders created the 'Blue Heaven' rose

#### What to eat:

- Persimmons: During persimmons you can buy 4 persimmons for 100¥ by the side of the road.
- *Green House*: Persimmon sells flavored ice cream

### 池田町 **Ikeda-cho**

To get to Ikeda via train, take the *Yoro Tetsudo-Ibi Line* from Ogaki and get off at either Ikeno Station or Kita-Ikeno Station.

#### What to do/see:

- *Ikeda Onsen*. One of the best onsens in the area. It is famous enough to bring people to

visit from outside of the area, so it gets crowded. To get to the Onsen, go by car or bus. Buses run about once an hour from bus stop 1 at the south side of Ogaki Station. By train, it is about an hour walk from Kita-Godo Station.

- *Ikeda-san and Ikeda-koen.* Great place for Cherry Blossoms. Famous for hang-gliding / para-gliding. There is a hike to the top of the mountain, taking about 2.5 to 3 hours to hike up. It is a “brutal non-stop climb up, and a brutal non-stop climb down.” If you have a car, you can bypass the hike and drive to the top, starting just past Ikeda Onsen. If your drive to the top of Ikeda-san is not enough to quench your thirst for forest driving, there is another road that heads off into the trees in a southerly direction from Ikeda Onsen. It will take you on a long winding trek through dark woods, ending just north of Tarui. Ikeda park is not easily accessible by train. From Ikeda Station, there is about a 40 minute walk west.

- *Ikeda Disc Golf.* A new discovery in Ikeda is the presence of a Disc Golf course. It is easily accessed on foot or by bicycle. From Ikeno Station of the *Yoro Tetsudo-Ibi Line* head west. By bike it will take about 10 minutes, and on foot about 20 minutes. Just head west toward the mountain from the train station, and look for a huge domed gym structure located near the base of the mountain.

- *Kamagatani Gorge:* one of Japan’s national treasures. The *sakura* (cherry blossoms) that bloom here are ranked amongst Japan’s 100 selected famous places for sakura.

#### Where to eat

- *Ibi-cha Green Tea.* The tea is found in the areas of Ibigawa and Tanigumi as well as Ikeda. In town, you can pretty much hit any local tea shop to buy some.

- *Jyumanryou.* An izakaya on the north side of Route 53, Eneos gas station but before you reach the bridge crossing the Ibi-gawa.

- *Marugen Yakiniku.* Reasonably priced *yakiniku* located behind Jyumanryou. Look for a bright orange sign.

- *Bali High.* This is a great restaurant for pasta, pizza, Chinese, and other cuisines. It is a little expensive. Located very close to the Mega Mart / Max Value shopping complex in Ikeda, on the south side of route 53, just before getting to the onsen. You really can't miss it. The owner, Mr. Takahashi, or "A-Chan" as most people know him as, is a really cool guy.

- *Ogiya Yakitori.* Izakaya chain, located right next door to Bali High. It is a great place to go for cheap *yakitori* and an amazing assortment of other ‘bar foods’, drinks, or just to hang out.

#### 神戸町 **Godō-cho**

##### What to do/see:

- Gudo Hi Matsuri – During Golden week. At midnight, men in *happi* coats run through the waterways carrying large burning masses.
- Festival for a Dragon God, August 17<sup>th</sup>. Held by decedents of the legendary Yasutsugu (see legend)

##### Where to eat: (Restaurants may be a little bit pricey)

- *Tetchan Yakiniku:* Located along the main road, directly across from city hall, next to the post office. Nearest station is Hiro-Godo
- *Saika Yakiniku:* Located near Ogaki Joshi Tanki Daigaku, nearest train station is Kita-Ogaki. However, it is recommended to go there by car, as the station is not close.

## 垂井町 Tarui-cho

Tarui-cho has a number of places to visit and because all trains going west on the JR Tokkaido line stop there, these are easy to access.

### What to do/see

- Nangu Taisha Shrine: A beautiful shrine at the base of a 70 minute hike up Nangu Mountain and a beautiful look out perfect for a picnic. Near Nangu Taisha are several small shops. The most famous is *Owariya*, which carries very large, bright pink, fish-shaped *manju* (Japanese desert filled with sweet bean paste).
- Asakura Pagoda and Temple: A tall and pink pagoda. Turn left and explore a small forest road that joins the road you're currently walking on just before you reach the small bridge. If you follow the road, you will not only see a delightful stream, but eventually you will crest a dam and find yourself before one of the most peaceful, serene, and least visited spots in Japan. It's a small, pristine reservoir with a great sandbar perfect for having a picnic on or for a dip in the summer heat.
- Nakasedo: Part of the great East-West trade route that once connected Kyoto with Edo. It runs through Tarui and remains of the town's main street. Along it are a variety of stores and a couple more temples and shrines.
- *Ai Kawa* – River, great to see cherry blossom trees in April and Fireflies in June
- Less convenient locations are Tarui's northern outskirts include: *Takenaka Shijinya*—the encampment built by Shigekado Takenaka, son of Shigeharu Takenaka, a military strategist for the great Toyotomi Hideyoshi; *Fuwa Waterfalls*—just as nice as the Yoro ones, but not nearly as popular. *Fuwa Reservoir*—big and striking, but nearly empty. There is also great hiking in the area.

### Where to Eat:

- Guruman Bakery: About 5 mins south of the Station on the way to Nangu Taisha. Baked goods and fresh sandwiches. Walk to the back of the store to see where whole grains are milled to make bread.

## 赤坂町 Akasaka-cho (incorporated into Ogaki-shi in 1967)

This town sprung up as part of the Nakasendo route and later flourished as a marble and limestone mining town. The area also is home to a fantastical myth about a bodhisattva and a snake. You can access Akasaka by car heading north on route 18 towards Ikeda. If you go west towards Tarui through Akasaka-cho's main street, there is a shrine tucked away on the right side, about 150 meters past the *Ogaki Kyouritsu Ginkou*. To get to it you have to go down a tight alley. There's also a shrine at the top of the adjacent hill where on a clear day you can see across to Nagoya.

## 関ヶ原町 Sekigahara-cho

A cute town famous for its historic battle site.

### What to see/do:

- Sekigahara Battle Site: 5 min walk from Sekigahara station. The Sekigahara Battle Site is where, in the year 1600, Tokugawa Ieyasu and 70,000 of his men defeated an army of 79,000, "paving the way for the creation of the shogunate and the beginning of the Tokugawa Era." Every

October there is a Battle Festival, with people dressed up like Samurai.

- Sekigahara History and Artifact Center: 5 min walk from Sekigahara station. The History and Artifact Center holds seasonal/yearly exhibits about the Battle of Sekigahara, as well as information about major world battles at sister cities (e.g. The Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, USA; The Battle of Waterloo, Belgium). Previous exhibits have displayed armor soldiers wore during the Battle, real swords used in battle, as well as storyboards and maps to better understand the war.

- Sekigahara Station Center for Tourism and Exchange: a step outside of Sekigahara station. Newly opened in 2015, the Center for Tourism and Exchange is the town's primary gift shop for purchasing all of your Battle souvenirs and snacks. Selling everything from T-shirts, to East vs. West Army-flavored ramen, to replica swords from the battle, The Center for Tourism and Exchange is your number one stop when you first arrive in Sekigahara.

- Sekigahara War Land: Theme park with samurai-robots.

- Classic Volkswagen show: Hosted every year in April.

- *Mt. Ibuki*: Although actually in Shiga-ken, given its proximity, and the fact that its driveway is in Sekigahara, we've included it. There is a paragliding school based at the bottom of the mountain. The ski resort is basic but it does the trick if you're craving powder but don't have the time or money to travel far. The hike is a fun if somewhat taxing two to three hour round trip from the gondola that takes you halfway up. You can also drive to the top if you're willing to pay the toll (about 3000). The top boasts good views of Lake Biwa on a sunny day, wide fields of wildflowers, and a small village of food and souvenir vendors.

### 墨俣町 Sunomata-cho (incorporated with Ogaki City in 2006)

Sunamoto can be accessed by car or by bus (buses go from Ogaki Station and Gifu Station)

#### What to do:

- *Sunomata-jyou*: The castle is said to have been built in one night by *Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, the second of the three leaders known for uniting Japan. Fantastic for cherry blossom viewing: arching tunnels of cherry blossoms line the riverside roads in several directions from the castle, and it's possible to walk for at least a couple kilometers under the canopy of flowers.

#### Where to eat:

- 500 円 *Home-cooked Dinners*. This little place between Sunomata and Hozumi offers full Japanese dinner sets for as little as 500 yen. Open only at night, you can get *tempura*, *katsudon*, *soba*, vegetables with beef and more. The restaurant is actually attached to a house and the older couple who run it always give you a warm hello when entering.

### 安八町 Anpachi-cho

Anpachi is set on plains surrounded by Nagaragawa and Ibigawa rivers, and has many levees to prevent flooding. This region has fertile land for farming and is a leading Gifu grain producer. Anpachi is also quite an industrial town.

#### What to see:

- The *SANYO Solar Ark*. This colossal structure is a solar photovoltaic power generation facility. The building includes a *Solar Lab*, a museum of solar energy and other unique exhibitions.
- *Anpachi Hyakubaien* Park: Between March and April, check out the 139 varieties of Plum trees.

From Ogaki Station, get on a bus from stop #2 or #3 on the south side of the station that is bound for Gifu-hashima Station, get off at 青刈 and walk about 15 minutes.

- Heartpia Center: an Observatory, an insect museum, a small historical museum and the best place to eat a set lunch in town (700 yen)
- Anpachi Onsen: Only 300¥. Small, but a nice place to relax.

### 上石津町 **Kamiishizu-cho (incorporated with Ogaki City in 2006)**

If you like scenic country hikes or bike rides filled with nature, Kamiishizu is a beautiful place for such outings. Unfortunately, no trains go to Kamiishizu. However, there are busses that run from Ogaki station to Kamiishizu.

#### What to see:

- Nihon Showa Ongaku Mura: Learn about the history of Japanese music. The musical hall often has concerts.
- Rent a Canoe and paddle the reservoir. Should you want a weekend get-away, you can rent a fully furnished cottage
- Tokiyama Mountain Time Bluegrass Festival. Usually around June.
- *Mikadagawa*: The river runs along town, and is perfect for a picnic

#### Where to eat:

- Arapeggio: Italian food, but a little pricey. Located within Nihon Showa Ongaku Mura.
- Lots of mom-and-pop restaurants along the main strip of road that runs through the town as part of route 365

### 養老町 **Yoro-cho**

Yoro is easy to access by train from Ogaki Station to Yoro Station (approx. 24 mins).

#### What to do:

- *Yoro Koen*: is the most popular reason for going to Yoro. It is a pleasant mountainside park that is great for viewing fall foliage and cherry blossoms (more than 3,000 cherry blossom trees in the park). Filled with omiyage shops and often food vendors.
- Yoro Falls: The site of Japanese legend, and named one of Japans top 100 Waterfalls.
- The Site of Reversible destiny: a large-scale experiential art installation designed to make visitors question their state of reality.

### 輪之内町 **Wanouchi-cho**

Wanouchi is a small rural town. From Ogaki Station, buses run to Wanouchi once an hour and cost 510¥ The name of this town literally means “within the circle” and this refers to its position surrounded by dikes, as well as the *Ibigawa* (揖斐川), and *Nagaragawa* (長良川) rivers. Wanouchi was founded in 1954 when the three smaller towns of Nikki, Fukuzuka and Oyabu merged. Pottery from the Yoyoi Period (400 B.C. to 300 A.D) has been found in the town. Perhaps the most significant historical event in Wanouchi was the building of the dikes/levees that surround the town. During the mid to late 1700’s the ruling Shogun *Tokugawa Ieshige* attempted to weaken the power base of the powerful *Satsuma* samurai clan, which was located on the *Kyushu Islands*. The Shogun ordered the Satsuma feudal lord to send samurai and resources to the Mino region to help with embankment work

along the three Kiso Rivers (木曾三川): the aforementioned Nagaragawa and Ibigawa, as well as the *Kisogawa* (木曾川). As part of their work the Satusuma Samurai created embankments and modified the rivers to make the land safer and prevent the constant flooding that affected the area. Building the dikes and altering the rivers was very dangerous and difficult work. In total 88 men lost their lives.

#### 平田町 **Hirata-cho (incorporated as Kaizu-shi in 2005)**

To get to the Hirata area, take a bus from Ogaki station leaving from stop #2 to Imao (look for the kanji 'ima' 今 and 'tail' 尾). The nearest train station is on the Yoro Tetsudo-Line, Komano Station, but prepare for quite a far walk from the station.

##### What to see:

- Ochobo Inari Jinjya has a festival the last day of every month. From dusk to the wee hours of the morning, regardless of season or weather, you can enjoy the usually festival trappings of food, drinks, games, produce, and cheap oddities.
- *Sagi-cho Matsuri*. Held at the *Imao Jinjya* around early/mid February. Inebriated young men in makeup and floral kimonos light bamboo pillars on fire, knock them over, and then push the burning debris away, over and over and over again. It's designated as an "important intangible folk cultural asset" to Gifu-ken. And it's probably the second most entertainingly dangerous festival in Gifu (taking a back seat to the Tejikara Fire Festival, held every spring).

#### 南濃町 **Nanno-cho (incorporated as Kaizu-shi in 2005)**

##### What to do:

- *Suishonoyu* (水晶の湯) *Onsen*. This onsen is big and new, and right on the side of a mountain. It's has indoor and outdoor baths, saunas, and massage. If you do not have a car, you will have to taxi from Komano Station, or walk for just under a half hour. From the parking lot at the bottom of the mountain, there's a free shuttle bus that will take you up to the onsen.
- *Kisosansen Koen*: The majority of it lies in Mie and Aichi kens. The park is where 3 major rivers meet: *Ibigawa*, *Nagaragawa*, and *Kisogawa*. The park has grassy patches, a tulip festival in the spring, and "illumination" in December. To get to the park, take the *Yoro Tetsudo-Yoro Line* to Ishizu station or Tado station, and then a bus to the park.

##### What to Eat:

- M & D's Café: The owner Keiko Deguchi is extremely nice and the food is great. It is within a walk-able distance from Ishizu Station.

#### 海津町 **Kaizu-cho (incorporated as Kaizu-shi in 2005)**

Kaizu is a marshy area encircled by the Three Kiso Rivers (木曾三川).

##### What to see:

- Kisosansen Koen: mentioned above in the Nanno-cho section. Within this portion of the park there is a famous row of pine trees called *Zenbonmatsubara*, planted by samurai from *Kagoshima* who also helped save Kaizu from flooding.

## 大垣市 Ōgaki-shi

Ōgaki, city of water, is known as being the most centrally located city in Japan. It has a population of approximately 160,000, and is one of the largest cities in Gifu prefecture. Ōgaki has quite a few restaurants, drinking spots and leisure facilities, and so can be a good place to hang out. The JR train station has good links, so it's easy to meet friends from other areas of Seino and Gifu here.

### Orientation

Two main roads intersect Ōgaki. **Route 21** runs east (towards Maibara) to west (towards Gifu), through the north end of the city. **Route 258** (known locally as the 'ni-go-pa') runs north to south, east of the train station.

Ōgaki is easily explored on bicycle. There are several **bike parks** surrounding the station. So, if you find yourself coming to Ōgaki often, but don't live here, it would be an option to leave a bike in the city for when you visit.

### Tourist Information Center

For more information on Ōgaki, especially its events and festivals, call into the **Ōgaki Tourist Center** at the south side of the station. It's an extremely small place, so be careful not to miss it. The staff may not speak English. Nevertheless, you should be able to pick up some leaflets in English.

### Festivals and Events

#### **Jumangoku Matsuri**

Where: Central Ōgaki

When: Around the 10<sup>th</sup> of October.

What: This is pretty much your standard shrine-carrying, shouting and alcohol-drinking festival. It can get rather noisy! But it's made special by the fact that Seino JETs are often invited to help carry the City Hall's *omikoshi* (portable shrine). Plus, a drinks cart is pulled alongside the parade, which means free drinks as you go.

#### **Ōgaki Matsuri**

Where: Central Ōgaki

When: Early May

What: The matsuri features the eleven traditional floats of Ōgaki making their way on a tour of the city. There is also a wide range of foods and vendors who show up for the fun. It's a relatively sedate affair, but is a pleasant way to spend a weekend afternoon.



#### **Mizu Matsuri**

Where: Ogaki, Suimon River

When: Beginning of August

What: Highlights include paper lanterns being floated down the *Suimon River*, *Tanabata* decorations along the street, and local Ogaki folk dances along with the typical stands of festival food.

### **Weekend shopping festivals**

There are many shopping festivals throughout the year. The large shopping malls that have appeared in Ogaki in recent years have hurt smaller businesses. These weekends are a good chance to buy from local traders. They are friendly affairs, often with food, music and dance performances.

Every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month there is also an Idol/Cosplay/Music event on the main road south from the train station

## **Things To See**

### **Ogaki Castle and park**

**Ogaki Castle** (Ogaki-jo) 大垣城 is situated in the center of the city. It is located in a pleasant park and during the spring, the cherry blossoms around the park and the castle are particularly beautiful. The park is a good spot for meeting friends and picnicking (BBQs are not allowed).

### **Sumiyoshi lighthouse area**

Heading south of the park past City Hall is the **Sumiyoshi Lighthouse** and canal area. This is a nice walk, especially during the blossoming spring months. This is the site where the poet *Matsuo Bashō* finished his famous journey (*Oku no Hosomichi* or, *The Narrow Road to the Interior*). It's marked by a **statue of Bashō** with his traveling companion, Sora. You'll also find a **red bridge**, which looks perfect in photos against the springtime blossom. The **wooden boat** in the river is a reminder of Ōgaki's importance as a trading post in times gone by. There's a **small museum** close by, but there's little English information.

### **Sunomata "Ichiya (one night)" Castle**

There's another castle in Ogaki – and, as legend would have it, the **Sunomata Castle** was built in just one night. The castle, in the east of the city, was built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a general of Oda Nobunaya, while performing a siege on Inabayama Castle. Sunomata Castle is also a popular spot for spring *hanami* (cherry blossom viewing)



### **Fresh Water springs**

There are many of them, and several within walking distance of the station. Bring empty bottles, and drink to your heart's content. The water really is good here, and is used to make local products such as **mizu manju** ('water cake', but more like a jelly), which can be found in the traditional sweet shops along the high street. Look for the carts outside of the stores. Some shops serve the sweet together with muicha (refreshing tea), so you can enjoy a nice sit-down if the sauntering gets too much.

### **Rest posts on the *Nakasendō***

In the Edo Period, the *Nakasendō* (or the *Kisokaido*) was one of the five major routes across Japan, used for trade and traveling. Along the route – which ran from Nihonbashi in Edo (Tokyo) to Sanjō Ōhashi in Kyoto – were 69 rest stations. Locally, rest stations were **Meiji-juku** (Mizuho), **Akasaka-juku** (Ōgaki), **Tarui-juku**, **Sekigahara-juku** and **Imasu-juku** (Sekigahara). Akasaka-juku was the 56th of the 69 stations, which flourished during the Edo Period as it was located in a fertile valley, next to a river.



*Hiroshige's impression of Akasaka-juku*

## **Eating & Drinking**

The best approach to finding the hidden gems in Ōgaki is to simply explore; don't be afraid to walk into a bar or restaurant. The locals really get a kick out of seeing foreigners in small establishments (usually since they want to try out the few English words they know!) Routes 21 and 258 are fairly long roads, so some places are best reached by car. However, if you don't mind cycling, the city is your oyster.

## **RESTURANTS**

### **Along Route 258**

Running north-south of the city, there are many places to grab a bite. At the northern end, towards Route 21, you can find several noodle shops. However, most of the restaurants on this road are south of Aeon Town

- **Denny's**
- **Coco Ichiban:** Japanese Curry chain. Allows you to choose the level of spiciness.
- **Staminataro:** a buffet (Viking) restaurant. *Tabehodia* (all-you-can-eat) for ¥2000 over a ninety-minute period. Choose from *yakiniku*, curry and rice, *agemono* (fried foods), *sushi* and desserts.
- **McDonalds**
- **Sukiya**
- **The Takoyaki Stall**

### **Along Route 21**

Running east-west through north Ōgaki, you can find

- **Coco's California Restaurant**
- **Saizeria:** A family restaurants with a diverse menus
- **Coco Ichiban:** Curry chain. See above
- **Bronco Billy:** A slightly expensive but good American-style steakhouse, a rather tatty
- **KFC:** The store is slightly run down, but good for everyone's Christmas chicken desires

- **Sushiro:** A kaitenzushi (Conveyor belt sushi) place. Dishes are mostly 100¥ for a plate of sushi (some are more expensive). Of all the Kaitenzushi chains, Sushiro is often thought of as the best.
- There are also *yakiniku* and *ramen* shops here.
- **Brazilian supermarket 'Amigos':** At the intersection of Route 18 and Route 21. As well as being good for cheap meat, cheese, and products imported from Brazil, which are great for Spanish cooking, upstairs there is a **buffet café**, which also serves large burgers and other delicious foods.

### The road alongside Aeon Town

The road running east next to Aeon Town has a few treats too.

- **Marino's:** an Italian restaurant with English menus. They specialize in set meals to share (appetizer, salad/soup, pasta, pizza, drinks and dessert), which are very reasonably priced. The pizzas are thin and crispy, and cooked in a stone oven. Marino's also does takeout (pizzas only). You can choose 'half&half' for an additional ¥100. You'll have to pick your order up, but you can place your order on the phone.
- **Mos Burger:** Try the burgers which have the bread bun replaced with rice cakes!
- Look for *Ramen* and *Yakitori* shops as well.

### Along Route 18

- **Babyface Planets**, supposedly a cool place for young couples and dating parties. The menu has pizza, *omu-raisu*, and pasta and rice gratins.
- **Nakamura-tei Maze Soba:** Located right next to *Babyface Planets* and a branch of the famous *Nakamuraya* located just down the street, this is where you HAVE to go to satisfy your mixed ramen-bowl needs. They offer relatively spicy dishes for the area, including Taiwan-style *maze-soba*. They are open almost every day unless the owners decide to randomly take off, and they stay open for dinner until 10pm.
- **Nakamuraya:** A ramen shop. Look for a big yellow sign, and the queue waiting outside. Rain, snow or shine, people will wait a long time for this ramen, and justifiably so. The fatty-meat pork broth soup, *abura-soba* is highly recommended.
- **Pastel:** an 'Italian' restaurant. This shop is well-known for its pudding, and all-you-can-eat pizza.
- **Masala Master**, an excellent Indian/Nepalese restaurant. It has a yellow sign, with a sun motif. The owners are Nepalese and fluent in English, as well as Japanese. The food is delicious, and they have a beast of a set meal for dinner. There is a limited menu at lunchtime, but they offer lunch sets that include salad, curry and your choice of naan or rice. Masala Master does takeout. The restaurant is located on Route 18, just west of the Municipal Hospital. If you are coming from Ōgaki station, go down the main street in front of the station, take a right once you hit a T-intersection. The shop will be on the right-hand side of the street, but it's quite far down, so bicycle/bus is recommended.
- **Chorky's.** A perennial favourite with JETs, Chorky's is a 50's style American diner serving up the best hamburgers in the area (argued best in Gifu-ken; when you go up to Takayama check out Center 4 Burgers and decide for yourself). There are also the most glorious milkshakes in a variety of different flavors. The menu is in English and in Japanese, and they stay open fairly late on weekends. To reach Chorky's, head south on

Route 258 and turn left when you see Ōgaki hospital on the right (Route 18). Go down two blocks, and you'll see it on the left (north side) of the street.

- **Gyukaku**, a reasonable yakiniku restaurant. The all-you-can-eat course here is especially good.

### Along Route 31

- **Riyoi**: A nice Chinese restaurant. Going down Route 258, south from the station and taking a left onto Route 30 for about 2 blocks, or if you're walking then go straight down south from Aeon Town along the canal until you come to the intersection and see a big red and yellow sign. It's about a 10 minute walk.
- **Shinbatei**: A small, houselike ramen shop serving excellent *tsuke-men*. If you are in the mood for soft noodles, rich broth, and a TV with the vibe of your grandparents' house, go here!

### Ōgaki station area & high street

Walk straight out of Ogaki Station and down the main street for a large selection of cute and delicious small restaurants.

- **The Korean restaurant**: Look for the Korean flags outside. They serve excellent home-made *kimchi*. They also do a limited takeout menu. And there's a small
- **Italian café**: Small, but they serves perhaps the only lasagna in the city.
- **Sushi and noodle shops**: just a short walk down the high street too. These places do some handsome fresh takeout bentos. They also do eat-in set meals (including tofu made from Ōgaki water, *sushi*, noodles, rice and *tsukemono*), which make for a nice Japanese-style dinner, or a pretty lavish lunch.
- **Okonomiyaki**: Small mom and pop Okonomiyaki restaurant. The prices are quite reasonable, and the owners are super friendly and great.

### Other places

- **QuicheQuiche**: near the police station.
- The city has many other treats, and these can often be uncovered by picking up a copy of **Wao! Magazine** (delivered free to most homes in the city).

## IZAKAYAS

Izakayas are where most people go to drink, and most offer food as well. Walk down the high street, and you'll find several, but you are likely to need some Japanese to be able to order (many izakayas have *karage* (fried chicken), so if you don't speak Japanese, that's a good go to order)

- **Barrel**: a classy joint near the station. From the South exit take a left, the bar will be on your right-hand side, just after the small bridge. This place is really small but the bartenders are fantastic and the liquor selection is unbelievable. This place specializes in whiskey but they have pretty much everything else you can imagine too.
- **The Ogaki-jo Saloon**: Another classy place and serves food as well as alcohol. Located near the castle, the calm atmosphere of the place is accented by a garden in the back with a waterfall you can view from your table. It's a little pricy, but quite nice.
- **Hatagoya**: Nice because of its proximity to the station. Walk left out of the south exit, and take the first road on the right. It'll be on your left. It is (supposedly) French-

Japanese style, and has a wide (picture) menu to choose from. Upstairs, they take group bookings, with all-you-can-drink set courses.

- **Warajaya:** Turn left out of the south exit of Ogaki station, walk two to three minutes, and it's on your left, just before the footbridge. Warajaya is a classy izakaya/restaurant with great Japanese and Italian food. However, it can get a little pricy. This is a great place to grab dinner with friends or hold an *enkai* dinner on their second or third floors.
- **Yataiya:** Walk straight out of Ogaki's southern exit and along the main strip to find Yataiya. Keep going and take a left just before crossing over the river bridge. Yataiya is just around the corner on the left. A great little izakaya with a friendly owner who speaks no English but often gives discount beer vouchers if you spend a lot of money. The food and beer is good, and it's a great place to chat to some Ogaki locals.
- **Ogiya:** There's always a branch of this chain izakaya lurking somewhere around the corner (look for the blue crouching Buddha-like guy on the sign). Ogiya is usually a good place to find the local youngsters or young-at-heart eating yakitori and drinking *nama biiru* (beer on tap) in a no-frills but authentic izakaya atmosphere. In Ogaki, there's a 258 branch (a little more lively and said to be the Japanese youngsters' preferred pick-up joint) and another branch across from Softopia.
- **Uotami:** Izakaya close to the station that is open until 5AM. Great if you miss last train, and want to wait for first train in the morning. Look for the red signs, across from the station of the left hand side. The menu is extensive and pretty cheap.

## **BARS**

There aren't many western-style bars in Ogaki, and we've looked! On the high street, there may appear to be a couple, but the glasses of beer are small, and the cover charge high. Unless you're going to eat there, these places can make for an expensive experience. **Snack bars** tend to be invitation only, so you'll need to make friends with a local salaryman if you want to go to one of them. There are a couple of places that are recommended though (although a cover charge will apply).

- **Wave** is just behind the big bank building on the high street (the big white square building that glows green at night). The White Russians are recommended.
- The **Blues Bar** (we're not sure this is actually its name): It's small, so easy to miss. It's opposite Nishiōgaki station. It's a cluttered little place, with a jovial blues-loving old guy running the show. You should really only come here if you are prepared to drink whiskey – the menu's pretty limited!
- The **Gifu FC Sports Bar:** just around the corner from the Tomidaya supermarket. Walk south from the station, and take the second major road on your left (east). It's a pretty smart place, so don't come here looking too scruffy. They show football, and the bar staff love to talk about it.
- **Miroku:** There is also a nice little bar of the south main road of the station but it's hard to find as it has no sign outside. What it does have is two stuffed toy cows outside in a variety of amusing positions, good music and truly great cocktails.

## COFFEE & QUICK BITES

Ōgaki is certainly not short of coffee shops, and many of them are delightfully kitsch. Many serve set breakfasts, so if you're an early riser and don't want to prepare your own, head to a coffee shop and see how the modern Japanese do breakfast.

- **Komeda coffee:** Spacious with plush red seats and a decent menu. People while away hours here, reading books, chatting, working or studying, and no-one seems to mind. However, should you be brought a small cup of 'service' tea, it might go home because apparently that's the cue to leave. Go out of the north side of the station. Turn right, and keep going for five minutes. You'll find Komeda on your left at the junction.
- **Birion:** Located on Route 21 just after the intersection turning to Ogaki Station, this coffee shop offers a quiet, clean environment with rich drinks, small salads/sandwiches, and decadent desserts. The best part is that it stays open late – until midnight 365 days a year.
- **Vie De France:** At Ogaki Station
- **Mister Donut:** At Ogaki Station. Be warned, it is usually filled with students hanging out.
- **Doutor:** At Ogaki Station. For ambience, Doutor is perhaps the best in the Station.
- **Lotteria**, also at the station, is cheap and dirty fast food. In the summer, grab a *kakinori* (shaved ice) to quickly feel refreshed.
- **Cheesecake Princess:** A nice place for good cheesecake. It's within walking distance of Ōgaki station, but it's a bit of a trek. You'll find it just one block south of Ōgaki City Hall. It's a little expensive, but the food is generally of high quality.
- **Onigiri Koro Koro:** This little bento store east of Yanagen has the freshest and cheapest lunches and *onigiri*. A hand-made hot onigiri costs only 80 円 and made-to-order *bentos* range in prices from 300-550 円. It's a favourite with students too, and you'll often find them sneaking out from *juku* to grab a snack. To get to the store, go south from Ogaki station, and left at the first light. It's a small store with orange banners.
- The **Shopping Malls** have food courts perfect for quick and cheap food.

## Shopping

### SHOPPING MALLS

Seino is lucky to have many shopping malls in the area. Don't take the ease of shopping for granted, many other areas of Gifu are not so lucky, so take advantage of the shops available to you.

### Aeon Town

JETs living within Seino will have visited **Aeon Town** (especially those living in the Ogaki teachers' apartments - *kyouin jutaku* – which are right next door). Check out

- **Sports Authority**,
- **Sleeping Factory**
- **Daiso** (¥100 store)
- **MaxValu** supermarket, 24 hours and carries quite a few western brands, but you may need to hunt for them.
- The **Food Court** (downstairs) has an eat-in curry restaurant, Saizeriya (chain of inexpensive family-



style Italian), ramen shop and Korean restaurant. Or grab something from McDonalds, Sukiya, the udon or okonomiyaki places, and sit down in the communal seating area. That way, everyone gets to eat from different places

- **Korona World** is an entertainment center with a twelve-screen **movie theater**, **bowling alley**, **karaoke**, **game center**, and **pachinko parlor**. Korona World's **sentō** (Japanese-style bath) is a wonderful place to spend a winter afternoon or evening, sweating in the sauna, getting a massage and taking a long bath, but be warned, if you are teaching in Ogaki, there is a good chance that you will see students or parents there.

To get to Aeon Town: Free shuttle bus outside of Ogaki Station picking up from the police station. From Ogaki Station South Side, buses leave from stop #3 and cost 240¥. Alternatively it's about a 15 minute walk. Simply exit south from the station, and turn a left and walk straight for about 10 mins and it will be right ahead of you.

### Aquawalk (APITA)

The mall is located just north of Ōgaki station.

- **MUJI**
- **Seria**: A ¥100 store
- **Uniqlo**
- **Kaldi Coffee Farm**: For foreign foods and fresh coffee
- **Restaurants and the Food Court**: Downstairs tends to be restaurants, ranging from tofu buffet to *misokatsudon* and *agemono* to a place where you cook-your-own meat on a personal sizzling hot plate. Upstairs, there is a communal seating area, and the shops tend to be fast food style.
- **Tokyo Glass Company**: A cheap place to buy prescription eye glasses ¥5,000-8,000)
- **The JEUGIA Culture Center**: offers a variety of classes in martial arts, dance, arts and crafts.

How to get to Aquawalk: Exit the station on the North. It is a 1 minute walk.



### AEON Ogaki (Different than AEON Town)

This titanic mall is located in southern Ōgaki. Some of the stores here also have larger sizes than the average Japanese store. Check out:

- **Starbucks**
- **Kaldi Coffee Farm**
- **AEON** department store.
- **St-Marc Café**
- **Subway**
- **Tsutaya Form**: New and used designer handbags and regular shoe store
- **Village Vanguard**: kitschy gifts, home items, books, and all other manner of cool stuff
- **Shanghai Kaiyasu**: All-you-can-eat Chinese
- Much much more



How to get to AEON Ogaki: From the south side of Ogaki Station, take a bus from stop #4. It is a good trek by bike. Alternatively, on the Yoro Testudo train line, it can be reached from the Mino Yanagi stop, and a 15 minute walk southeast of the station.

## Heiwado (APITA)

On Route 31, east of the city, this is by far the smallest of the Ogaki malls, and perhaps the least visited by JETs. It closes earlier than the others, but its grocery store tends to offer more discounts than some of the others. It also has a **Kahma home center** where you can buy some furnishings for your house, as well as tools and gardening equipment.

## PLANT 6

A Mega complex south of Ogaki (though more in-between Ogaki and Hozumi). It has a full grocery store including a produce section and bakery as well as a pet, car, home goods, electronics, clothing, outdoor, sporting, shoes and luggage sections. All the items are sold at low or vary reasonable prices. PLANT 6 is easiest to reach by car.

## SUPERMARKETS

There are supermarkets in all of Ōgaki's shopping malls but, while they might be convenient, they are not always the cheapest or best.

- **Valor:** north of Ōgaki station, cheap and often discounts heavily at the end of the day (meat, fish and ready-prepared foods especially).
- **Tomidaya:** Not far from Aeon Town. Very reasonable, and has a good selection of bento-ready eats.
- **Amigos:** The Brazilian supermarket, just north of Route 21. This supermarket has a few things which are hard to find in Japan, such as cilantro.
- **Yanagen:** A department store on the high street. It also has a supermarket in the building behind. There's a small but nice bakery here, and the deli counters stock *agemono* and salads. Exit the station through the south exit and walk straight.

## HOME GOODS

- **Nitori:** Similar in style to IKEA, selling reasonably priced flat-pack furniture, kitchen equipment and furnishings for every room of the house. Located down Route 258.
- **Sleeping Factory:** For soft furnishing, but it can be a little expensive. Located at Aeon Town.
- **Kahma:** For the DIY types,, they have every supply or tool you will need. Located in the Heiwado complex. You can find another large DIY shop just northeast of Muro station (north of the tracks). Exit the station on the south side.

## ELECTRICAL GOODS

- **Edion:** They sell everything from heaters and lights to cameras and kitchen appliances. From the station it's about a 15 minute walk. Go straight down from the station and take the first right.
- **K's Denki:** Down the road from Aquawalk
- **JOSHIN:** Ogaki Aeon Mall.
- **Yamada Denki:** On the 258 across from Nitori.

## SECONDHAND STORES

Secondhand things are sold in "recycle stores" in Japan. You can also sell things at these places too, but don't expect to get a lot for what you sell.

- **Second Street:** On Route 258 for clothes, furniture, and electrical goods.
- **Treasure Bomb:** On Route 258 for clothing, anime related action figures and goods, and some used brand handbags. Almost at the junction of Route 258 and Route 21, you can find another store,

but it's mainly furniture and a little more expensive.

- **Hard Off/Book Off** on Route 21 is the place to find books, CDs, movies and musical instruments.

### MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

- The **guitar and musical instrument** shop on the high street. They also give drum and guitar lessons.
- **Shimamura Music** in Aquawalk has a wide range of instruments and accessories. Plus you can hire the room at the back of the shop for practicing.

### BOOKS

- **Apio department store:** Bookstore on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor above Ōgaki station. It gets crowded with students reading magazines after school. There are a couple English books and maps.
- **Shopping malls:** The three major shopping malls in Ogaki all have book stores.
- **Maruzen:** In Nagoya, in Sakae. It has a large collection of English books on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. It's glorious, but slightly expensive.
- **Kinokuniya:** In Nagoya on the sixth floor of the Sakae Loft. Has an English book section.
- **Amazon.co.jp:** Recommended option for books. It has a "shop in English" option for its Japanese operations. With loads of English books, CDs, and free shipping on orders over ¥1500, it's hard to go wrong. They are considerably cheaper online. Most orders take only a few days, and you can usually pay COD. There's also the option to pay over the counter in a convenience store.
- Another option for English books is to purchase a Kindle or similar e-reader from your home country. As long as you have a credit or debit card account still active in that country you can purchase books easily. Not to mention that you won't end up with a bunch of heavy books.

### ALCOHOL

- **Liquor Mountain** keeps the JET community well-oiled. Anything you can think of (and many things you can't!) are here – liquor, beer, wine, sake. Located on Route 21, best reached by car or bicycle. If you're walking, leave Ōgaki station through the North exit and walk straight for 10-15 minutes until you reach Route 21, then turn left and you'll find it on your left. Closed on Tuesdays. As well as alcoholic drinks, you can find a variety of other goodies here, including a good selection of cheeses, hams, dried pastas, sauces, and even Tim-Tams for the Australians and Hershey's for the Americans.
- **Nihonshu brewery:** This place has been making *nihonshu* in Ogaki for years. The shop is small, and not much English is spoken. This reasonably-priced *sake* makes a good gift, if you're ever stuck for a present. They will even wrap it for you. Go out of the station's North exit. Make your way to the first floor. Aquawalk will be in front of you. Turn right, and walk to the next junction (Komeda Coffee is on the corner). Turn left, down one of Ōgaki's most traditional streets. Keep going to the end of the street, and the brewery's shop will be right in front of you, across the road, on the left. It's about a fifteen minute walk from the station.
- There are a number of small family-run sake shops around Ōgaki. There's a particularly good one on the high street, not far from the station. Go out of the south exit and walk straight. It'll be on your left.

### TICKETS

- Concert tickets can be bought at various convenience stores through an automated kiosk.
- **Yamagen**, near the stairwell, there's a booth where you can buy tickets to concerts around

Japan. This is the place if you'd rather speak to a person than use a machine.

- Discount train and *shinkansen* tickets can be bought from a little office on the high street (just on the left, as you look at the station (close to the *koban*), or in a small store in Aquawalk on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

## Entertainment

### INTERNET CAFES

If you wanna hang out in a little booth, surf the internet, play someone else's games or read someone else's manga, then go to an internet café. Unlimited soft drinks are a bonus.

- **Dream Chain** on Route 21
- **Korona World** at Aeon Town under the movie theater.

### PURIKURA & AMUSEMENTS

How to spend a couple of hours on a rainy day? You can find game centers and *purikura* machines (photo booths that print onto stickers/seals) at **Aeon Town**, **Ogaki Aeon** and **Aquawalk**.

### BOWLING

- **Waku-Waku Bowling**: This is an arcade, bowling, pool and video games center. Located just opposite of Liquor Mountain on Route 21.
- **Korona World at Aeon Town**

### KARAOKE

- **Shidax** Go down Route 258 towards Yoro, and you'll see it on the right about 50 meters before the *Shinkansen* tracks. Once you're a member, you can choose from a vast array of *nomihodai* (all you can drink) menus.
- **Japan Rent-a-Car**: By far the cheapest place to go "karaoke-ing." Rather than paying per person, rates are based on room rental. You are also free to bring in your own alcohol and treats from the outside.
- **Korona World at Aeon Town**

### SPORTS CLUBS & GYMS

- **Konami Sports Club** is located in Ōgaki right beside Aeon Town. Telephone: 0584-74-6811. The Sports Club has an indoor 25-meter swimming pool, a weights/cardio room, and two aerobics studios. A full membership includes access to all facilities, at any time (circa ¥11,000 per month). To become a member, you need to fill in forms in Japanese. In addition to the completed forms, to join you will also need your *inkan* (your Japanese stamp that acts as your signature), bank account information (payment from account) and the joining fee. You may need to pay fees for the first month or two up-front.
- The **Ōgaki City Budokan** (武道館) is quite far from the center of Ōgaki. It's approximately 30 minutes cycle from Ogaki station. Go south down Route 258, away from Ōgaki, and under the *Shinkansen* tracks. You'll see signs for it in English. It will be located on your left, just off Route 258. The Budokan is an excellent place to practice martial arts. They have a variety of classes running throughout the week. There is also a great gym, which is free to join and only ¥300 each

time you go. The Budokan is only a few years old, a modern facility, paid for and subsidised by Ōgaki taxpayers. It is definitely worth the cycle.

- The **Yuming indoor swimming pool** (ゆーみんぐ屋内温水プール) is located in Ono at 1451-3 Shimozagura. Postal Code: 501-0534. Telephone: 0585-32-4682. No membership required. For one small drop in fee, you can enjoy this six lane heated swimming pool, and small exercise room. You need to wear a swimming cap; if you don't have one, you can purchase one there for a fair price. Accessible by car, and has free parking (the closest station is Mieji station on the Tarumi line, however it is around 45min walk to the pool).

### LIBRARIES

- **The Suitopia Center & Ogaki Library** (スイートピアセンタ): The main education and cultural exchange site for Ogaki. The Library has a reasonable collection of English books on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. There is a daily copy of the *Japan Times* in English, as well as TIME Asia in English. To join, fill in a form and you'll be issued a card.
- **The Gifu Prefectural Library**: Located near Nishi Gifu station. The Library has a good collection of fiction and non-fiction books in English and other languages. They also have magazines from around the world. The English books are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. To join, fill in a form and you'll be issued a card. You can borrow up to ten items at any one time. To get there, take the JR line to Nishi-Gifu station. From the station you can walk (10 minutes) or catch the free shuttle bus to *toshokan and bijutsukan* stop (the second stop). The bus leaves about every half hour

### CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

- **JAPANESE LESSONS: The Suitopia Center**: contains the **Ogaki International Center**. The International Center has official information on life in Ogaki or local events. Ask for a Japanese tutor. It's a volunteer system, so you may need to wait a few weeks until someone suitable can be found, but you can soon enjoy weekly lessons at the Suitopia Center. To apply simply fill in the form, and someone will call you (in English).
- **KIMONO WEARING**: You may need to be taking Japanese lessons at the International Center to take advantage of this. You can spend a morning being dressed in a kimono. It's a good photo opportunity.

### ART & TECHNOLOGY

- **Softopia**: This is the technological hub of Gifu. On occasion, some interesting events are held here, including the graduation exhibition for IAMAS (a graduate school and specialized vocational school in media arts and sciences). This educational institution is also located in Ogaki.

## Personal Care

### HAIR SALONS & BARBERS

If there is one thing Ōgaki is not short of, it's barbershops. You will see red and blue barber poles all over the place! They'll give you a short back and sides anytime.

- **G.TRIP**. The stylist's name is Tomoko Mackintosh and she speaks wonderful English. She lived in London for eleven years doing salon work. The salon operates based on reservations, so pop in and set one up, or give them a call (0584-40-7810). To get there, walk straight down the main

street in front of the station. **G.TRIP** is on the right side of the road, on the second floor, right above the clothing shop called **GLAMDY** (this clothing, by the way, is all designed by a native Ogakian). Basic prices are: ¥3,825~4,500 for a cut, ¥6,375~7,500 for coloring (Tomoko's favorite! She carries/can order colors that are otherwise difficult to find in Japan), ¥5,355~6,000 for a perm. Tomoko may even give you a discount on the first cut. If you keep a point card, you can get a good discount after a few appointments.

- **"Hair and Make."** if you fancy something a little more 'Beckham'. From the South exit of Ogaki station, head south along the strip. Take a left at the second interchange and walk along the canal. Walk for two or three blocks and it's on the right hand side of the road. Look for big orange "S" sign. This place is for men and women. They don't speak English, and it's a little expensive. Your fourth haircut is free
- **Rapunzel** (Gifu City 0582-64-4486). Tomomi-san is the owner and she speaks English. Examples of prices: ¥4,500 for a cut, ¥9,800 for a perm. If you're not familiar with Bierhall, you can follow the over pass from Gifu Station and take the stairs on the left side of the big street where the buses stop. Hook a left at the corner where the JyuRoku Bank is located. Go two blocks up, and turn right. Go straight for two more blocks and *Rapunzel* is on your right hand side on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the *Le Clair* building.
- **3Q Cut (San-kyuu)**: If you're looking to get the job done in 30 minutes max for only ¥1,080, visit one of the 3Q Cut branches in either Aquawalk Mall (9:30-19:30) or AEON Town Ogaki (9:00-19:00) open year-round. Reception closes 15 minutes before the stores.

## RELAXATION

There are no *onsens* in Ogaki but there are *sentos* (public baths- more or less the same thing).

- **Korona World**, Aeon Town is highly recommended, especially in winter. It has a variety of indoor and outdoor baths, or various shapes and sizes. It can get crowded though. There are also big leather massage chairs here, and you can use the big communal sauna (everyone wears flannel pyjamas), or book a massage.
- **Kirei**, the small shop opposite Sports Authority which has massages.
- **G-Trip salon**: Upstairs from Glamdy on Ogaki High Street. This is supposed to be the most relaxing massage in town.

## DOCTORS & DENTISTS

If you get sick, tell your supervisor and they'll probably take you wherever you need to go and happily translate away. But in case that's not an option, or you would just prefer to find a doctor on your own (in which case, remember there's a helpful 'medical' section in the back of the JET dictionary).

### General Practice

- **Nawa (名和) Hospital**: In Ogaki, on Route 258, near the Tomidaya grocery store and the Kyouin Jutaku. From Tomidaya, go down Route 258 (away from the station). It is the tallest brown building with four kanji characters written in white in blue boxes. There are two entrances. Choose the second one that has an area similar to a regular emergency room. Its open Mondays to Saturdays, 8:30 am to 12 pm, and 4 pm to 7 pm. The nurses don't speak English, although some doctors might be able to speak some English. Tel. 0584-78-3111

### Dentists

- **The Sugita Dental Clinic** in Ogaki is located on the street just west of the Kyoushoukuin Jutaku. The sign is purple and green and is written in romaji. They don't speak much English but are very reliable.

#### **Ear, Throat, and Nose**

- **Inagawa Jibika:** Located about 15 minutes walking from Ogaki Station, this clinic provides superb, fast service at decent hours. Even if it's just a sore throat, this clinic is a good place to go for an immediate, after-work, no-appointment-necessary check-up. Open Monday through Saturday 9:00-12:00, 15:30-19:00 (Saturday afternoons 15:00-17:00; every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday closed).

## The Folklore of Seino

Japan has a long history of legends and folklore. Each town has their own folklore. Here are some of the more famous legends of Seino

**Ibigawa-cho** -Yashaga-ike, the pond located atop a mountain in Sakauchi-mura

Once a long time ago during the Heian Period there was a relentless drought in the Godo-cho area. One day, a man of influence by the name of Yasutsugu unwittingly complained about the weather to a grass snake. He told the serpent he would offer his daughter in marriage if it would make it rain. Unfortunately for the man, this was no ordinary snake, but instead the incarnation of the Yashaga-ike dragon god.

The deity appeared in Yasutsugu's dreams that night promising to fulfill his wish, and immediately thereafter rain poured down on the land. As a result, when the deity came in human form to collect his bride, Yasutsugu had no choice but to make good on his promise. His daughter went to live with the god in his mountain pond and is said to have become a dragon itself. Some believe that the daughter's name was "Yasha" and that the pond was named "Yashaga-ike" in her honor. Henceforth in times of drought, people go to pray for rain at Yashaga-ike.

**Akasaka-cho** - This town sprung up as part of the Nakasendo route and later flourished as a marble and limestone mining town. The area also is home to a fantastical myth about a bodhisattva and a snake:

Long ago, when the bodhisattva now enshrined in Akasaka-cho was just a young pilgrimaging monk, he paused to urinate in a tuft of grass. Unfortunately, he accidentally hit an enormous snake. This gigantic serpent was actually a woman that had fallen in love with the monk as he was traveling through *Ise*. Her ardent desire to see him again had caused her to transform into a snake. Now damp and angry, she began to chase after the bodhisattva. The surprised bodhisattva cast off his straw hat and made to escape.

After some time he became thirsty and pleaded for some tea from a nearby farmer, only to be rejected. Try as he might to ignore the craving, he had to stop and drink water. After quenching his thirst at a spring in the area, he began running again. At long last the bodhisattva hid inside a cave in *Mt. Kinshou*, but the great snake began to constrict about the cave. As the cave began to collapse the bodhisattva yelled out, "I will enshrine you above myself. So help me!" With these words the snake stopped its binding and disappeared. To this day the huge serpent is worshipped as a tutelary god, *Jao Gongen* (snake queen incarnation) at *Myojyorinji Temple* in Akasaka-cho.

The spot where the bodhisattva cast off his hat is now called Kasanui-cho and the place where he stopped for a drink is now known as Gama-cho.

**Yoro-cho** -Yoro Falls is famous for a legend about its Kikusui Spring near the falls:

Long, long ago, there was a woodcutter in this Mino area who, although poor, took care of his aging father. One day when the woodcutter went into the mountains to gather firewood the smell of *sake* came wafting from between some moss covered rocks. Thinking this was odd, he tasted the water and found that its flavor was indeed that of sake. Happily he filled a gourd with that water and brought it home. He had his father drink it and it is understood that the old man joyfully said: "This sake is second to none!"

The celebratory and merry laughter of father and son was eventually heard all the way in the capital of *Nara*. *Gensho*, the empress of the time, responded to the news: "This must be praise by the gods of heaven and earth for the virtues of filial piety." With this interpretation, the empress herself made her way to the versatile wilds of Yoro, and bathed in the beautiful spring that had transformed into sake, now known as *Kikusui-izumi*.

Empress Gensho then stated, "This is a spring of amazake, and its water restores youth. I too have become younger." She decided to commemorate that auspicious year, renaming the era as *Yoro* to commend filial piety and loyal wives.

### **Wanouchi-cho**

During the Edo Period in *Niremate Shinda Village* (now within Wanouchi) there lived a peasant youth by the name of Kanne who possessed both a kind spirit and extreme physical strength. One day when Kanne was on his way home after loading his horse's back with harvested rice, he encountered a water administration magistrate, along with a procession of attendants from *Tara*. Since the road was very narrow there was no way to avert the meeting, however Kanne agilely grabbed his horse's feet and lifted the animal onto his shoulders to dodge the company. The surprised and impressed feudal lord that witnessed the feat bestowed Kanne with many rewards. From this time on the location was established as *Umayokeba* and villagers refer to the site as *Kanne no Uma Yoke-ba* in appreciation of the peasant's feat and the lord's recognition. Today a small plaque marks this spot.