

Hidden Wonders | Roadside Stop with a Sea-Facing Hot Spring

近年、「道の駅」はドライブ途中に立ち寄る休憩場所だけでなく、その土地ならではの魅力を楽しむ観光スポットとしても注目されています。秋田県の「道の駅岩城 アキタウミヨコ」も、温泉や宿泊、食事などを一度に楽しめる場所の一つです。旅の途中に立ち寄る場所が、そのまま旅の目的地になることもあるのかもしれませんが。あなたは、道の駅にどのような施設やサービスがあれば、泊まってみたいと思いますか。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Japan's roadside stations, or michi-no-eki, have become destinations in their own right.

Designated rest stops along ordinary roads, they offer free parking and toilets as well as information for travelers. Many also [feature](#) restaurants, shops selling local specialties, tourist facilities, hot springs and [accommodation](#), making them hubs for local [communities](#).

At Roadside Rest Area Iwaki Akita-Umiyoko along National Route 7 in Yurihonjo, southwestern Akita Prefecture, visitors can enjoy a view of the sunset over the Sea of Japan from a hot spring, stay in an affordable cottage, and dine on Akita Yurigyū steak, a local brand of Wagyu beef.

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Source: Hidden Wonders | Roadside Stop with a Sea-Facing Hot Spring

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Japan Forward

1. Article

The Sea of Japan stretches out beyond the windows of the [facility's](#) spacious bathing area. Toward evening, as the wind and waves die down, the sea takes on a calm, glassy appearance.

Even on cloudy days, the setting sun turns the clouds crimson as it approaches the horizon, becoming a deep red orb before slowly disappearing. On clear days, it casts a brilliant glow across the sky.

Bathers, from children to the elderly, sit in the tubs or on chairs and gaze silently at the view. The setting sun casts a gentle glow on their faces.

The facility's natural hot spring has a large communal bath and an open-air bath. The water is a sodium chloride-rich saline spring with a slightly viscous texture. It is said to be beneficial for cuts, sensitivity to cold and fatigue.

A 64-year-old man from Sendai said he visits the hot spring whenever he returns to the area because his wife's parents live nearby.

"I could see the sunlight stretching across the sea, but the view is even more impressive in summer," he said.

His 61-year-old wife also praised the facility.

"It has 100% natural hot spring water, a sauna and a cold bath, all in such a great location and at a reasonable price," she said.

More than 360,000 people from inside and outside Akita Prefecture visited the roadside station in fiscal 2024, according to manager Satoshi Nojiri. About 85,000 of them used the hot spring.

"People are pleased that the water warms them thoroughly and that they don't get cold easily after leaving the bath," Nojiri said.

The hot spring is not the only attraction. Five wooden cottages with triangular roofs and 16 tent sites are located on the northern side of the facility.

The cottages have a kitchen and dining area, two bedrooms with four beds in total, cooking utensils and balconies overlooking the ocean. Nightly rates are ¥14,000 (about \$90) to ¥16,000.

1. Article

The tent sites have electrical outlets, a cooking area, coin-operated laundry facilities, toilets and coin-operated showers. They cost ¥4,800 (about \$31) to ¥5,600 per night.

Visitors can enjoy the sandy beach overlooking the expansive Sea of Japan or have barbecues on the grassy grounds. The facility is municipally operated, keeping accommodation costs relatively low.

"It's so popular that [reservations](#) for summer weekends fill up within seconds after bookings open 60 days in advance," Nojiri said.

After working up an appetite, visitors can head to Umiyoko Shokudo, the roadside station's restaurant.

Its most popular dish, the Umiyoko Seafood Rice Bowl, costs around ¥2,500 (\$16), depending on market prices. It comes piled with locally caught seafood.

The restaurant also recommends its ¥3,300 teppanyaki steak set, featuring 200 grams of Akita Yurigyū beef, a brand of black-haired Wagyu raised in the Chokai Highlands. The premium beef has a firm texture, and its rich juices spread across the palate with each bite.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. feature 特徴として備える

The new office building features a large rooftop garden.

2. accommodation 宿泊施設

We bought our plane tickets, but we are still looking for accommodations.

3. community 地域社会

When I was growing up, the community I lived in had people from many different cultures.

4. facility 施設

The university built a new sports facility on the west side of the campus.

5. reservation 予約

Because the place is always busy, I made a reservation for the restaurant several days ahead.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. Where is Roadside Rest Area Iwaki Akita-Umiyoko located?
2. What can visitors see from the hot spring?
3. When do summer weekend reservations usually fill up?
4. What kind of facilities would make you want to stay overnight at a roadside station?
5. Do you think local food is an important part of a good travel experience? Why or why not?

4. 夕日が沈む日本海の絶景を眺めながら天然温泉で癒しを 「道の駅岩城 アキタウミヨコ」

いまや観光の目的地としても存在感を放つ「道の駅」。高速道路などの「サービスエリア（SA）」や「パーキングエリア（PA）」も含めて、記者が「これは」と思った東日本各地のスポットを訪ねる。

日本海に沈む雄大な夕日を温泉につかりながら堪能でき、リーズナブルな料金のコテージに宿泊できて、レストランで秋田由利牛のステーキを味わえる。秋田県南西部の由利本荘市の国道7号沿いにある「道の駅岩城 アキタウミヨコ」は、秋田ならではのレジャー要素が盛りだくさんだ。

広い浴室の窓に広がる日本海は、波風が静まって夕なぎだ。曇りでも、太陽は水平線に近づくと雲のベールをあかね色に染め、丸く真っ赤になって、ゆっくりと静かに沈んでいく。晴れていれば、輝きながら夕焼けを空全体に広げる。湯船につかったり浴槽のふちや椅子に座ったりして、入浴客は子供から老人までこの絶景に心奪われたように無言で見入り、その顔を夕日がほのかに照らす。

施設内の天然温泉「岩城温泉港の湯」。大浴場のほかに露天風呂などがある。泉質はナトリウム―塩化物強塩泉。黄褐色でとろみがあり、切り傷や冷え性、疲労回復などに効くという。

仙台市から来たという男性（64）は「妻の実家が近所で、帰省のたびに利用する。海面に伸びる夕日の帯が見えたが、夏はもっと迫力がある」。妻（61）も「この立地に源泉100%でサウナや水風呂もあり、低料金でありがたい」と満足そうに話す。

「道の駅全体で令和6年度に県内外から36万人余りが訪れ、このうち約8万5000人が（港の湯に）入浴した」と支配人の野尻聡さん（67）。「ぽかぽかと体が温まり、湯冷めしにくいと喜んでいただいている」と手応えを示す。

天然温泉だけではない。施設の北側には木造三角屋根のコテージ5棟と、テントサイト16区画がある。

次頁に続く

出典：夕日が沈む日本海の絶景を眺めながら天然温泉で癒しを 「道の駅岩城 アキタウミヨコ」
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コテージはダイニングキッチンと2つの寝室（計4台のベッド）からなり、調理器具を備え、オーシャンビューのバルコニーも。料金は1泊1万4000～1万6000円。また、テントサイトには電源や炊事棟、コインランドリー、トイレ・コインシャワーがあり、1泊4800～5600円だ。

市営のため料金が手頃な上、広大な日本海を望む砂浜で海遊びを、芝生広場でバーベキューを楽しむのが特徴。「夏場の休前日などは、60日前の予約開始から秒速で埋まる」（野尻さん）という人気ぶりだ。

遊び疲れたら、道の駅のレストラン「ウミヨコ食堂」へ。一番人気という「ウミヨコ海鮮丼」（時価で2500円前後）は、地場の魚介類が丼からヒマワリのようにはみ出るほどのボリュームがある。お勧めは、鳥海高原産の黒毛和牛「秋田由利牛」の鉄板焼きステーキ（200グラム）セット（3300円）。適度な弾力が特徴の特上肉をかめば、深い味わいの肉汁が口いっぱいに広がってくる。



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