

ONSENS (Hot Spring baths)

Hakuba is well known for the number of natural Onsens available to visitors. After a long hard day of skiing or boarding, nothing is more relaxing than sitting in an Onsen easing the pain and tension out of your body. The Japanese Onsen is truly a wonderfully relaxing experience.

Onsens are located throughout Hakuba and are open to Japanese and Westerners alike. Each Onsen has separate changing, showering and Onsens for male and female visitors.

Whilst getting naked is a little awkward at first, once you are in the Onsen it is an absolute non issue as no one pays you any attention. Everyone is in the same boat as you, just wanting to soak and relax.

Onsen etiquette

- 1) Take off all your clothes in the changing room and place them into a basket together with your bath towel. Coin lockers for valuables are often available.
- 2) Japanese hot springs are enjoyed naked. Swimming suits are not allowed. However, it is the custom to bring a small towel into the bathing area with which you can enhance your privacy while outside of the water. Once you enter the bath, keep the towel out of the water.
- 3) Before entering the bath, rinse your body with water from either a tap or the bath using a washbowl provided in the bathing area. Just rinsing your body is usually sufficient unless you are excessively dirty in which case you want to use soap.
- 4) Enter the bath and soak for a while. Note that the bath water can be very hot (typical temperatures are 40 to 44 degrees). If it feels too hot, try to enter very slowly and move as little as possible.
- 5) After soaking for a while, get out of the bath and wash your body with soap at a water tap while sitting on a stool. Soap and shampoo are provided in some baths. Like in private Japanese bathrooms make sure that no soap gets into the bath water. Tidy up your space after you have finished cleaning your body.
- 6) Re-enter the bath and soak some more.
- 7) After you have finished soaking, do not rinse your body with tap water for the minerals to have full effect on your body.

