

Hoshino Resorts KAI Nagato Opening on March 12th, 2020

Theme of “Ochaya Yashiki” Inspired by Samurai Culture

On March 12th, 2020, Hoshino Resorts (Headquarters: Karuizawa, Nagano; CEO: Yoshiharu Hoshino) will open “Hoshino Resorts KAI Nagato” (hereinafter “KAI Nagato”) at the Yumoto Onsen in Nagato, Yamaguchi Prefecture. In January 2016, the company was commissioned by the Nagato government to create the “Nagato Onsen Master Plan.” They then published the “Nagato Yumoto Onsen Tourism Revitalization Plan” based on this master plan in August 2016, and with the overarching concept of “a stroll through the onsen district,” they have been working with local community groups on projects to revitalize the onsen district, one of which is the creation of KAI Nagato.

As one of these projects, the AKEBONO Cafe, the first facility under the KAI brand open to people who are not hotel guests, will be opened alongside KAI Nagato. This cafe will sell *dorayaki*, which visitors can enjoy while strolling through the onsen district.



About KAI Nagato

KAI Nagato, the 16th property established under the KAI brand, lies at the base of Akebonobashi, a bridge that crosses the Otozuregawa River, which flows through the heart of Nagato Yumoto Onsen, a riverside onsen region surrounded by the mountains of northern Yamaguchi. With the theme of “Ochaya Yashiki,” which has existed in Yamaguchi Prefecture since antiquity, KAI Nagato will strive to create a resort where guests can fully experience the region’s rich culture. The lobby and guest rooms will have a style inspired by samurai culture, and the KAI Cultural Discovery (a selection of free activities designed to introduce guests to Japan’s regional cultures) will offer Akama inkstones made from the red clay that is characteristic to this area.

About the Nagato Yumoto Onsen Tourism Revitalization Plan

Nagato Yumoto Onsen is a historic onsen that was frequented as a health resort by the heads of the Mori clan in the Edo period, and during the era of rapid economic growth, it was incredibly popular, with around 400,000 visitors per year. However, due to the changes in the way people travel in recent years, the number of visitors to the onsen town had fallen to about 200,000 in 2014. To counteract this, in 2014, the Nagato municipal government began to start projects designed to revitalize the onsen district. In January 2016, Hoshino Resorts was commissioned to create the Nagato Yumoto Onsen Master Plan, and since then, they have been working with local community groups on projects to revitalize the onsen district, such as the expansion of the KAI brand into the area.

The basic policy created by the company as their strategy to enter the National Onsen Top 10 Ranking is the idea of aiming to create an onsen with a beautiful town that utilizes its natural features, after analyzing other onsen regions around the country. To achieve this, they outlined the six elements “open air baths”, “eating tour”, “cultural experiences”, “ease of navigation”, “picturesque scenery” and “space where you can relax”, that are necessary for an attractive onsen district utilizing the natural features and tourist attractions of the Yumoto area, and proposed a renovation of the resort to maximize the natural appeal of the region. In addition to the plan to construct the onsen resort KAI Nagato, the following projects are also being carried out:

- creation of terraces along the river
- creation of *kawadoko* near the surface of the water
- rebuilding of ONTO, an open air bath said to be the oldest onsen in Yamaguchi Prefecture, and the face of the onsen district
- installation of lighting so people can walk through the streets at night
- a social experiment to experience and investigate the future of the onsen district (September 1st - 30th, 2018)



Hoshino Resorts hopes that this plan will encourage people to travel to the onsen district and enjoy strolling around the city, that the Yumoto onsen district will reclaim its former popularity, and that their efforts will contribute to the further development of the tourism industry in Yamaguchi Prefecture.

Hoshino Resorts KAI Nagato: An introduction

■ Shop: AKEBONO Cafe, open to non-guests as well

Since KAI Nagato will become part of the attractive onsen district outlined in the Nagato Yumoto Onsen Tourism Revitalization Plan, the AKEBONO Cafe, which is the first KAI establishment open to people who are non-hotel guests, will be established alongside the property, to add to the content people can enjoy while taking a stroll through the city. This cafe will offer *dorayaki* made with the jam of the Nagato Yuzukichi (a citrus fruit unique to Yamaguchi Prefecture) and the amanatsu fruit (which is said to have been imported to Japan, and first grown in Yamaguchi Prefecture); and also lattes.



■ Guest rooms: KAI Signature Rooms inspired by the samurai culture

The guest rooms inspired by the samurai culture of Yamaguchi are based on the rooms that the feudal lords used to stay in. The beds are raised slightly, and the latticed enclosure creates a sense of refinement.



• Tokuji Washi headboards

Tokuji Washi was established during the Muromachi period over 800 years ago, and was the largest manufacturer of Japanese paper in the Kansai region during the Edo period. At the time, it was one of the most important exports for the han (fiefdom), but since the Meiji era, Western-style paper has become more popular, and of approximately 4,000 manufacturers, only two remain today; they have now been designated Intangible Cultural Properties of Yamaguchi City. The kozo and mitsumata used to produce the Japanese paper are also grown by the resort, so they are unique in that they can adjust their materials to suit their needs.



• **Hagiyaki**

In the tokonoma (alcove), there are several shelves that will display KAI Nagato original Hagi pottery works made by three creators (Takao Tahara, Masahiro Sakakura, and Zenemon Sakakura) that live in the vicinity of the Yumoto onsen. Many Hagi ware pieces are simple designs that capitalize on the texture of the clay, and they almost never have decorations like pictures, but Hoshino Resorts requested pieces that maintain the warmth of Hagi ware but have new elements in their design.



Piece by Takao Tahara



Piece by Zenemon Sakakura

*They are currently being created, so the finished product may be different

■ **Meals: Kaiseki adorned with seasonal ingredients**

At the restaurant, featuring semi-private booths, guests can enjoy kaiseki (traditional Japanese multi-course meals) made with local in-season ingredients, using utensils designed by masters. Yamaguchi Prefecture boasts the second highest volume of squid consumption in the country, and guests will be able to enjoy sweet, thick, and soft raw squid served as an appetizer or as sashimi. Pickled vegetables, hassun, and sashimi will also be served together in an elaborate horaku-mori, served on Hagi ware dishes and a wooden bucket. The wooden bucket is made by Akira Sakamura, the only traditional bucket maker in Yamaguchi Prefecture, who was designated as an “Expert of the Forest” by the public interest incorporated association National Land Afforestation Promotion Organization.



“Hoshino Resorts KAI Nagato” at a glance

Name: Hoshino Resorts KAI Nagato

Location: 2245 Fukawa Yumoto, Nagato, Yamaguchi Prefecture 759-4103

Telephone: +81-50-3786-1144 (Hoshino Resorts Reservation Center)

Number of rooms: 40 (30 in the main building, 10 in the annex) *Annex rooms all have outdoor baths

Other amenities: Lobby, dining hall, travel library, shop, room to relax after the bath, AKEBONO Cafe, main bath (gender segregated; 1 outdoor bath for each gender, 2 indoor baths for each gender)

Nightly price: From ¥22,000 (per person when two people share a room; service fees included, tax not included; including dinner and breakfast)

Access: Approx. 60 minutes by car from JR Shin-Yamaguchi Station, approx. 90 minutes by car from Yamaguchi Ube Airport

Website: <https://kai-ryokan.jp/en/nagato/>

Opening date: March 12th, 2020

Bookings open from: November 12th, 2019

