

SaruHashi

■ One of Japan's "Three Unique Bridges"

- Recognized as one of **Japan's Three Unique Bridges** (*Japanese three-Kikyo*), along Kintaikyo (in Yamaguchi) and Shinkyo (in Tochigi). Variations include Kazurabashi and Kiso no Sanmaibashi.
- It is especially admired for its **innovative cantilever construction**, which does not use pillars in the river below.



• ■ Builder and Background

- Tradition holds the bridge that was first built in the **Asuka/Nara period**, around **600 centuries**, by **Shirako**, an engineer from Kudara.
- Legend says Shirako saw a chain of monkeys crossing, which inspired the **hanebashi** design.
- The current wooden structure reflects designs from the **Edo period** (1603–1868), especially after multiple reconstructions.

■ Structure and Scale

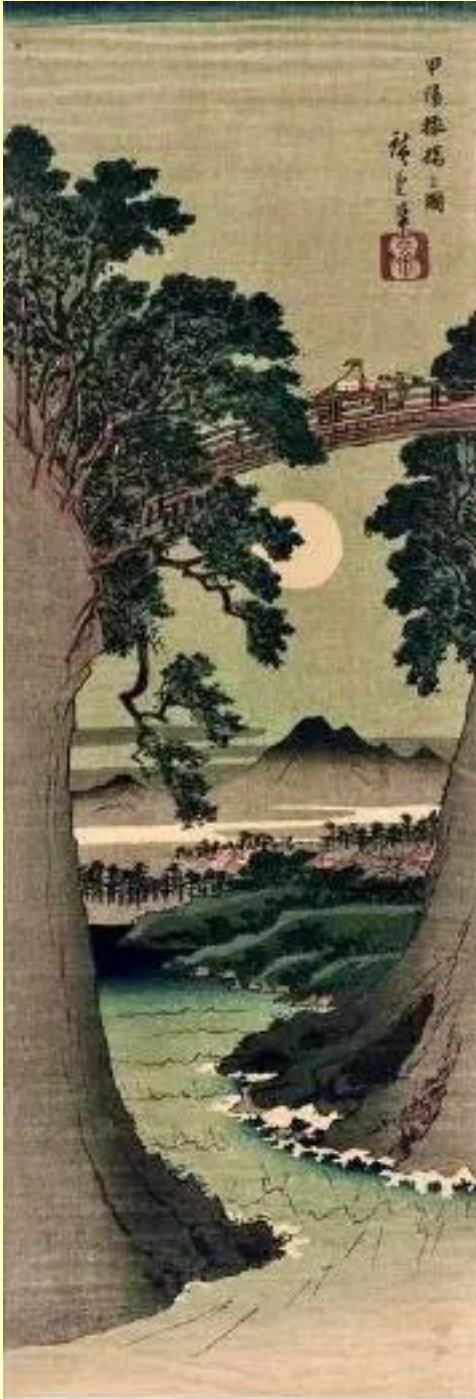
- The bridge spans approximately **30 meters** in length and stands about **31 meters** above the Katsura River.
- Width: around **3.3 meters**, enough for foot traffic and horses in older times.
- Made entirely of wood, the bridge uses **four layers of cantilevered beams** (called *hanegi*) embedded into the cliff sides for support.

■ Use as a Road (Baba – Horse Path)

- Saruhashi was part of an **important travel route** connecting the Kosyu Kaido, one of the Edo Five Routes, used by **samurai, merchants, and travelers**.
- Baba were once led across the bridge, and its size was designed to allow this kind of traffic.

■ Connection to Utagawa Hiroshige

- **Utagawa Hiroshige**, one of the most famous ukiyo-e artists of the Edo period, included Saruhashi in his series “*Famous Views of the*



Sixty-odd Provinces”
(1853–1856

- His depiction of Saruhashi shows the dramatic structure of the bridge suspended over a deep gorge, surrounded by natural beauty, emphasizing its elegance and engineering.
- Hiroshige’s artwork helped to spread the fame of Saruhashi across Japan and later to Western audiences as well.

🚗 TRANSPORTATION 🚗

TRAIN: Saruhashi station on the Chuo line

BUS: Chuo

Expressway by bus and
walk 20 minutes

★tourists also have the

option to join the bus tour around Yamanashi
including a walk along the “Saruhashi”.



SURROUNDING

Saruhashi Park: located west of saruhashi bridge, saruhashi park offers a quiet place to relax, with open lawns, simple playgrounds, and a variety of seasonal plants. The walking path that connects the park to the bridge is known for its hydrangeas, which reach full bloom in late June. Along the way, an observation deck offers a view of the gorge and the river flowing below.



Next to the park, there is the **Otsuki City Folk Museum**, where visitors can learn about the history of the region, including the story of the Saruhashi itself.

🌸 **BEST SEASON** 🌸

Spring: Tourists can enjoy the combination of cherry blossoms and bridge. Spring also brings other



seasonal delights-colorful flowers such as azaleas and violets bloom along the pass, and the birds like bush warblers can be heard singing nearby. The mild weather makes it ideal for a relaxing stroll, local shops offer traditional spring sweets like Sakura mochi, adding a flavorful touch to the visit.



Summer: tourists can enjoy the vibrant fresh



greenery that covers the mountains and the surrounding area. The lush green leaves create a cool and refreshing atmosphere around the bridge and the clear

stream below. It is a great time for nature walks and photography, as the vivid colors and gentle sunlight make the scenery come alive. The sound of flowing water and bird song adds to the peaceful feeling of summer at Saruhashi.

Autumn: It is breathtaking. The vivid reds and golds of the leaves seem to set the valley on fire, reflecting beautifully in the clear stream below, as you stand on



the bridge, surrounded by a sea of color, there is a quiet stillness in the air-a kind of beauty that makes you stop and simply take it all in. The contrast between the delicate leaves and the solid wooden structure of the bridge creates a scene that stays with you long after you leave.



Winter: It brings a quiet beauty to saruhashi. With the leaves gone the bare trees reveal the elegant structure of the bridge more clearly than in any

other season. The air feels crisp, the sound of the river seem louder, and the whole scene takes on a sense of calm and stillness. There is a kind of solitude in the winter light-soft, pale, and honest-that makes the view feel deeply personal, almost sacred.

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Resources

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