



**FEATURES**



# A Quick Stop in Paradise —Roadside Station Offers Plenty of Fruit, Vegetables, and Flowers

In the northern part of Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture, there is a roadside station, which, with an area of 35 hectares (350,000 square meters), is among the largest in Western Japan. Here is just like a kind of paradise—visitors can purchase local agricultural products and enjoy some 70,000 flowers in all four seasons. We asked the public relations manager about the characteristics of this spacious roadside station, which also houses an amusement park and lodging facilities on its premises. (Text: Tanaka Nozomi)





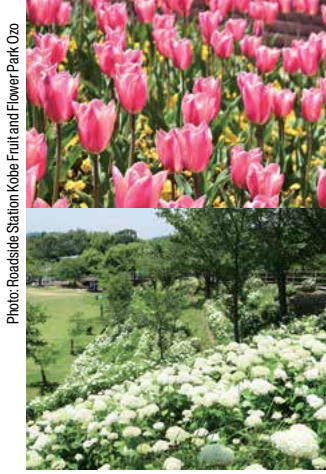


Photo: Roadside Station Kobe Fruit and Flower Park Ozo

Above: In spring, tulips in full bloom cover the grounds in vibrant colors.

Below: There are about 70,000 flowers planted in the park. The hydrangeas are in full bloom around June each year.

**M**ichi-no-Eki Kobe Fruit and Flower Park Ozo is a roadside station located in the northern part of Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture. Ezaki Soma, manager in charge of public relations at the park, described for us its characteristics: “This region has thriving agriculture, so our farmers’ market offers a rich variety of fruits and vegetables fresh from the field. It is famous for strawberries in the spring, sweet corn in the summer, new rice in the fall, and a local brand of green onions called ‘Hokushin’ and curly spinach in the winter. You-pick peaches, grapes, and other fruits from the park’s expansive orchards are another popular attraction. The park also proactively holds nutrition education events for children and thematic events dedicated to specific seasonal vegetables to promote local produce.” Visitors can savor freshly harvested produce at the park’s restaurant and barbecue site. In 2022, a whiskey and brandy distillery was built on the park premises and started producing single malt whiskey. “We are looking forward to the day when this authentic Kobe whiskey is ready. Visi-

tors of all ages, from children to adults, can enjoy the cuisine here,” adds Ezaki.

Another major characteristic of the roadside station is its amusement park, which features a Ferris wheel, a merry-go-round, and a roller coaster.

In addition to the amusement park, there is also a 1.2-km go-cart track, a miniature golf course, and a swimming pool for water fun in the summer. The vast grounds offer a wide range of activities for parents and children to enjoy together. During the winter months, the park is lit up by splendid illuminations. Staying at the hotel on the premises of the roadside station offers a relaxing way to enjoy the wide array of attractions (see photo). **■**



Photo: Roadside Station Kobe Fruit and Flower Park Ozo

Photo: PIXTA

Above: The Ferris wheel, which has fruit-shaped cabins, is the most remarkable attraction of the Kobe Otogi no Kuni Amusement Park.

Below: Kobe Illuminage, the light-up event held at the roadside station only during the winter months

Left page

Above

The roadside station park is full of seasonal flowers.

Below

Left: In the fall, many people visit the park to pick grapes.

Above right: Stylish buildings resembling circus tents form an area aptly named “Farm Circus” that features stands for fresh farm produce and a cafe. The amusement park’s Ferris wheel and the expansive view of the sky create a bright and uplifting atmosphere.

Below right: The Farm Circus Market offers a wide selection of locally grown vegetables and fruits, as well as alcoholic beverages and seasonings.



Photo: PIXTA

A beautiful roadside station where visitors can enjoy flowers, delicious food, and exciting amusement park attractions