

WELCOME TO THE MOUNTAINS OF AKITA

Grading of Mountains in Akita Prefecture

Akita's Mountains are Here to Climb!

A
mountain
guide who was
born and raised
in Akita
directs you!



Akita Prefecture

Mt. Chokai / Summer

How to use the handbook/What is grading?

Mountains in Akita Prefecture

There was a person who counted the number of mountains that cross through Akita based on maps, and they found 630 – making Akita place 8th nationwide. Akita is affluent in mountains, most of which have luckily remained untouched – most representedly, the Shirakami Mountains – and are known for alpine plants, autumn foliage, hot springs, and for being places of worship. We recommend you to hike one of these 33 mountains, which appeal to everyone.

Safe Mountain Climbing

This guide represents the abundant appeals of Akita and her mountains. The most important factor for safe climbing is to choose mountains that are a good fit for your skill level. Choosing mountains only because of their prestigious reputations or dynamic and famous sceneries could cause fatal accidents. For that reason, this table serves as a grading guide for mountains that defines the skill level necessary to climb each one. We hope you make use of it when choosing which mountain to hike next.

Grading of Mountains

The trekking routes included in this table are evaluated into 10 grades of physical strength, and 5 grades of climbing skill level. This table is compiled based on the national standard for mountain grades, so you can compare Akita's mountains with those outside of the prefecture e.g. Mt. Fuji (Physical strength 7 / skills B), Yarigatake Mountain (Physical strength 8 / skills C), and Mt. Iide (Physical strength 7 / skills C).

* As of 1 February 2019, 8 Prefectures (Nagano, Yamanashi, Sizuoka, Niigata, Gifu, Gunma, Tochigi, Yamagata) grade mountain trails by physical and technical levels. Please take a look at the website of each prefecture about difficulty of their mountains.

Physical Strength and Skill Level
























































(1) Physical Strength

- [1] The route's numerical score is calculated with the following four factors: course time, trek length, and accumulated differences in altitude while ascending and descending, respectively.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Route numerical score} = & \text{course time (hour)} \times 1.8 + \text{trek length (km)} \times 0.3 \\ & + \text{accumulated differences in ascending altitude (km)} \\ & \times \text{accumulated differences in descending altitude (km)} \times 0.6 \end{aligned}$$






* This calculation method was developed based on research conducted by Prof. Masayoshi Yamamoto at Kanoya Physical Education College.

- [2] Based on the result from [1], the evaluated score is then divided into 10 physical strength grades.

Physical Strength	Route numerical score	Physical Strength	Route numerical score
1          	Below 10	6 	Over 50 ~ no more than 60
2          	Over 10 ~ no more than 20	7 	Over 60 ~ no more than 70
3          	Over 20 ~ no more than 30	8 	Over 70 ~ no more than 80
4          	Over 30 ~ no more than 40	9 	Over 80 ~ no more than 90
5          	Over 40 ~ no more than 50	10 	Over 90

(2) Skill Level

Each course's required skill level is evaluated into 5 grades, A to E, based on geographical traits and required trekking skills. Each is assessed by the point of worst route condition along the course. For instance, a course starting with a gentle A grade slope but ending with a grade-C laggy point with chain-links will result in an overall grade of C.

Skill Level	Trekking course	Required Skills and Abilities
A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Almost completed •Less risk of slipping down •Less risk of getting lost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Thorough preparation required for climbing
B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Passes through hazardous spots, such as water streams, cliffs, and snowy gorges •Steep ramp •Difficult to identify the route •High risk of slipping down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Experienced skills required •Map reading skills encouraged
C 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ladders, chain-links, snowy gorges, and bridges •High risk of slipping down •Lacking necessary signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Map reading skills and enough physical strength to pass through ladders and chain-links are required
D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continuously difficult conditions, such as claggy ridges, deep bushes, snowy gorges, and bridges •Steep ramps that require hand climbing •Limited climbing tools prepared; high risk of slipping down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Map reading skills and the ability to balance during worse parts of the course are required •Route finding skills required
E 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •High risk of slipping down due to claggy ridges •Deep bushes in need of being pushed aside to move forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Map reading skills and the ability to balance during worse parts of the course, such as snowy gorges, are required •Route finding skills and the ability to identify dangerous climbing conditions required •Some hikers will need to use rope to climb

[Terminology]

Map Reading Skills: The ability to identify your present location and route towards your destination.

Route Finding: Find safe routes to take among courses that are not in climbing condition.

Pushing Aside Bushes: Moving forward while pushing aside bamboo bushes with your hands.



Note

Akita Prefecture is known for getting a lot of snow. As thus, snow normally remains until the end of spring at most mountains. Additionally, some of the access roads for getting to these courses have been destroyed due to being suspended for current tree-planting efforts.

To make things worse, many courses are not fully maintained, with maintenance conducting only once every few years.

Reports of bear appearances have also been increasing - thus, in preparation for various accidents, it is invaluable that you are well-prepared for climbing in advance. Be sure to check prospective routes and road conditions by contacting the relevant municipalities, and allow for leeway in your schedule.

(Akita Prefecture Automatic Application Service)

QR Code for Hiker Registration

-For smartphone/PC-

-For cell phone



Let's climb mountains in Akita!



The number
signifies an order
of review.





Futatsumori

The shortest trekking route needed to enjoy a panoramic view of the beech trees on Shirakami Mountain.

Height: 1,086.4 m

- Location: Happo Town / Fujisato Town
- Trek Length: 3.2 km
- Trek Altitude: 153.4 m
- Topographical Map (1/25,000): Futatsumori



grade

Physical
Strength

1



Skill
level

A



- 1 Mid-autumn season at the World Heritage Site
- 2 Autumn foliage at the summit of Futatsumori

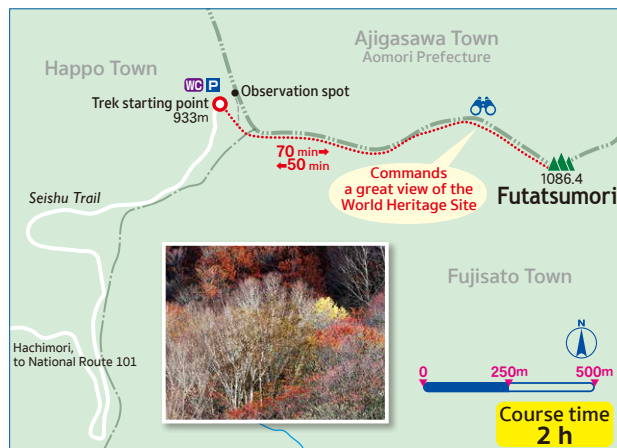
This trek is located in the first registered World Natural Heritage Site in Japan (1993), and only takes an hour to the mountain from Seishu Trail (construction suspended near the prefectural border between Akita and Aomori).

I was a bit disappointed by the view from the observation platform, so I returned to the slippery trail, watching my step along the way.

I leisurely walked, fully enjoying the beauty of nature, such as the ancient beech trees with their lively leaves, beech nuts, and the fluffy, carpet-like moss. I supposed the

untouched beech forest, which spread all over resembled broccoli, must have been preserved since ancient times. Going through the steep ramp and dense bamboo bush, I managed to arrive at the spacious summit, where I could catch the dynamic figures of Shirakamidake Mountain and Mukaishirakamidake Mountain. To the side, Mt. Moriyoshi and Tashirodake Mountain could be seen.

This is the perfect mountain to visit for an easy hike.



ACCESS

Take the National Route 101 from Noshiro City to go to Happo Town, and turn right shortly after JR Hachimori Station to proceed to Bunakko Land. The departure point is situated at the end of the Seishu Trail which is approx. 18 km further from its start. It takes around 50 min. by car from the trail start to the trekking starting point.

Contact Info.

Happo Town Office, Promotion Division for Commerce and Industry TEL 0185-76-4605
Fujisato Town Office, Division of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism TEL 0185-79-2115



Kodake Mountain

Here, you can fully enjoy an untouched beech forest and World Heritage Site, Shirakami Mountain.

Height: 1,042.5 m

- Location: Fujisato Town
- Trek Length: 6.7 km
- Trek Altitude: 444.5 m
- Topographical Map (1/25,000): Hiyamizudake Mountain / Mt. Ugoyake



grade

Physical
Strength

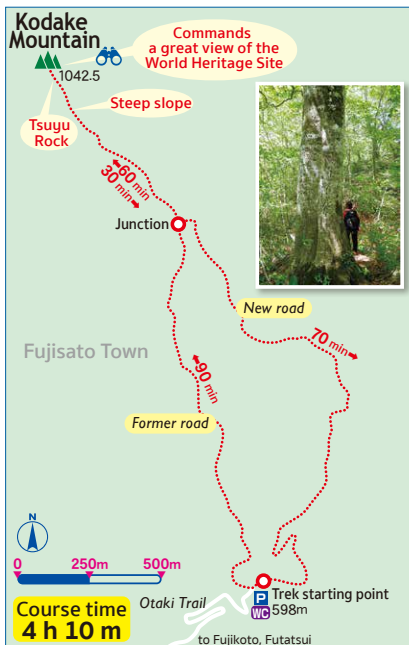


Skill
level

B



- 1 World Heritage Site
- 2 Creeping pine from the lowest place at which they grow on Honshu (main island).



The bad condition of the trail prevented me from taking the regular route, so I ended up taking an hour and a half long detour in order not to waste this opportunity.

When ascending the mountain, filled with its lush green beech forest, I could feel all of my senses appreciating the fresh air, which relieved my tiredness from the long trek. I couldn't help touching the fluffy moss, which felt just like an extravagant carpet.

I enjoyed the view while stepping up the wooden stairs. The creeping pine trees grown here are known for straddling at the lowest level in Honshu, Japan's main island. In the background of the red and yellow leaves of maple, oak, and lacquer trees, there was a lush beech forest, looking almost like broccoli. What an untouched, dynamic world heritage! I walked through the newly-constructed trail, which was also rich with beech forests.

ACCESS

The bad condition continues along the trails running from Lake Subari in Fujisato Town, which span about 20 km including Kasuge, Otaki, and Kodake Trails. While passing along them, please be alert for fragile ground. It takes around 2 hrs. by car from the Akita Express Highway Futatsui Shirakami IC to the starting point.



Fujisato Komagatake Mountain

Height: 1,158.1 m

Tanashiro Marshland is suitable for viewing alpine plants and yellowish beech leaves.

- Location: Fujisato Town
- Trek Length: 6.4 km
- Trek Altitude: 367.1 m
- Topographical Map (1/25,000): Otadake / Hijyashimizudake Mountain / Mt. Ugoyake / Manago



grade

Physical Strength



Skill level

B



- 1 Trekking through Tanashiro Marshland
- 2 Sheer cliff on the eastern side of the summit



In search for young and lush beech leaves, I climbed Fujisato Komagatake Mountain in early June.

I trekked the former course from Kuroishizawa through Tanashiro Marshland during the best season for viewing umbrella leaves, clintonia, and Japanese alpine cherry. I found the lush beech leaves very young, filled with downy hair. Looking around at and being surrounded by these soft green leaves, I took a deep breath of the rich, fresh air.

Climbing up the steep ramp led me to the junction with the newly-constructed course. I couldn't help but be attracted to the plants along my footsteps – such as glaucidium palmatum, Canadian dwarf cornel, and trientalis europaea – while watching out for the cliff on my left. I was impressed by the picturesque view of Shirakami and Mt. Iwaki. I highly recommend visitors to bring mosquito repellent, as there are many mosquitoes.

I revisited there in early July to see Tanashiro Marshland filled with yellow day lilies – there was a much greater abundance than I expected, which I was overjoyed to see.

ACCESS

Take the Akita Prefectural Road 317 (Nishimeya Futatsui Line) from Fujikoto District in Fujisato Town. Shortly after the Daira Ravine, turn left and go further about 32 km to find the trekking start which is also the trail terminal. About one and a half hrs. are required to move by car from JR Futatsui Station to the trekking start.

4

Tashirodake Mountain

A mountain renowned for its numerous alpine plants, ponds amid its marshlands, and the worshipped divine spirit, Shirahige Okami.

Height: 1,177.9 m

- Location: Odate City
- Trek Length: 10.9 km
- Trek Altitude: 532.9 m
- Topographical Map (1/25,000): Tashirodake Mountain



grade

Physical Strength



Skill level

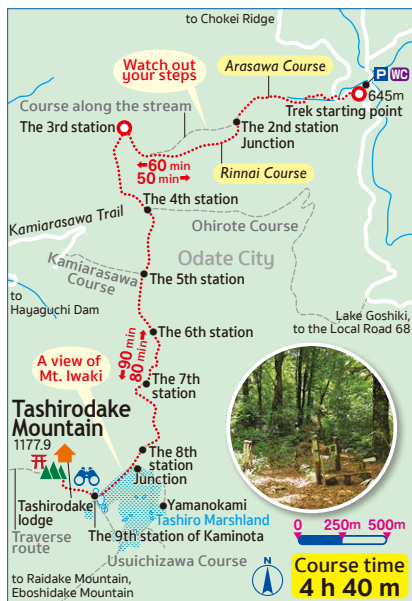


1



2

- 1 Spacious marsh at the 9th station
- 2 Tashirodake Mountain seen from Goshiki Lake



The eastern-most mountain of the Shirakami Mountain range, Tashirodake Mountain is believed to have once been the residence of Shirahige Okami, a divine spirit honored through a traditional local festival, Amekko Ichi (Candy Market).

As it was a beautiful day, I proceeded straight along the water stream at the junction of the Arasawa trekking course. Shortly after the passing where the Arasawa course converges with the forest path, I was drawn to the sasa kurilensis blooming along the trail amid bamboo bush.

The beech trees standing here were so alive that I felt empowered while walking.

I was fascinated by the view at the ninth station - as picturesque as heaven. I had a chance to see geum pentapetala, no bigger than anything else; fluffy eriphorum vaginatum growing over the spacious marsh land; and menyanthes trifoliate blooming over the scattered ponds, amid the marsh land. Mt. Iwaki, just to the side, also looked beautiful.

At the summit of the mountain, a shelter hut in conjunction with a shrine was renovated in 2018, which allowed visitors to come worship Shirahige Okami again.

ACCESS

Take the National Route 7 to go forward to Odate and turn to the Regional Road 68. Starting Koshiyama Mountain, proceed approx. 13 km along the trail on your left after crossing the bridge over the Lake Goshiki. It requires you about 50 min. by car to go to the trekking start from JR Hayaguchi Station.



Mt. Hoooh

With the character for big, dai, embedded in its surface, it is a mountain that thus symbolizes Odate City.

Height: 520.6 m

- Location: Odate City
- Trek Length: 11.4 km
- Trek Altitude: 330.6 m
- Topographical Map (1/25,000): Odate City / Kosaka Town



grade

Physical Strength



Skill level



1



2



- 1 A bench at the observation spot that is a part of Daimonji, a Kanji character over the mountain.
- 2 Mt. Hoooh observed from Iwagami Reservoir

Mt. Hoooh is so loved by locals that I always run into someone whenever I visit.

I proceeded clockwise from the Mt. Nagane parking lot by way of the reservoir. Passing by the restroom, I started climbing, choosing the direct course among the many available. At the 3rd station, an enormous kanji character appeared right in front of me. I was astonished! Turning right, I stepped into the illusional world filled with soft sunlight entering between cedar trees.

I had to go through a much steeper slope from the 7th station to stop by the 8th station's observation spot that overlooks Odate City, including Nipro Hachiko Dome and Tashirodake Mountain. Here is the best spot for enjoying lunch with a view.

Then on the way up to the summit, I encourage other visitors to look back at Mt. Moriyoshi while climbing up further.

You must come by shortly after Golden Week, as it is then that you'll be surrounded by glaucidium palmatum flowers, and able to fully enjoy this mountain.



ACCESS

Starting point is situated at Naganeyama Park Parking. There are some trails available nearby Iwagami Reservoir, including Aicho no Mori Course, which is included in the trekking course toward Mt. Hoooh, as well as Goseikon no Mori Course which is also converged to this trekking course.

6

Mt. Shiroji

Popular with visitors for its great view of Lake Towada and a marsh bountiful with alpine plants.

Height: 1,034.1 m

- Location: Kosaka Town
- Trek Length: 13.3 km
- Trek Altitude: 209.1 m
- Topographical Map (1/25,000): Western part of Lake Towada



grade

Physical
Strength



Skill
level



1

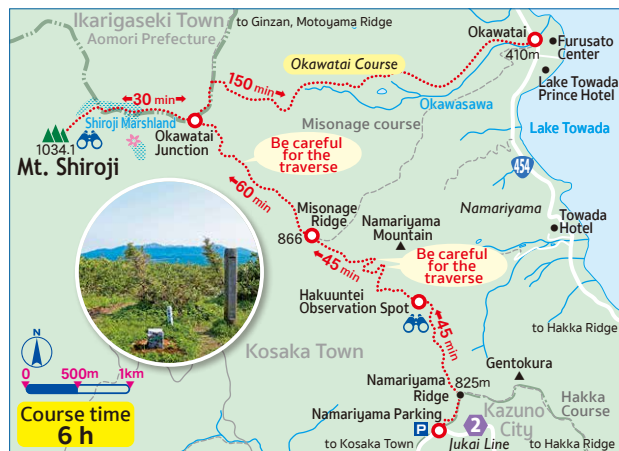


2

- 1 Overlooking Lake Towada
- 2 A trail within Shiroji Marsh

"Let's walk!" - in Early June, I embarked from Namariyama Park, ready to go. I walked through the new Jukai Trekking Course, which was relatively flat, and ran longer than the previous one.

I was impressed by the magnificent view of Lake Towada - which is loved by Akita Citizens - from Namari Ridge. I managed to get to Hakuuntei Observation Spot after stopping to overlook Lake Towada from every angle. Behind the lake, I could see the three mountains of Towada, covered with a light layer of fog, just like a Chinese ink painting. The quiet and spiritual view made me feel refreshed.



It was calming to be amid the spacious Shiroji Marsh, with primula nipponica and eriophorum vaginatum flowers blooming around it. Nearby the marsh, I could clearly see Mt. Iwaki and Mt. Hakkoda from the summit of the mountain. While climbing, I enjoyed not only the view of Lake Towada, but also of the various flowers, including glaucidium palmatum and clintonia udensis.

ACCESS

Take the Akita Prefectural Road 2 to Namariyama Parking, which takes approx. 20 min. from Kosaka Town, and 5 min. from Hakka Ridge, both of which are by car. *It is advisable to take the same route for the round-trip when carpooling in one vehicle from the summit, as the trekking terminal and starting point are located respectively at the different places.

7

Gonomiyadake Mountain

A faithful mountain believed to be named after the ancient Crown Prince Gonomiya.

Height: 1,115.0 m

- Location: Kazuno City
- Trek Length: 8.8 km
- Trek Altitude: 768.0 m
- Topographical Map (1/25,000): Yuze



grade

Physical Strength



Skill level



- 1 Gakkari Ridge is very close to the summit.
- 2 A large amount of remaining snow left on top of the mountain

Shortly before Golden Week, I climbed Gonomiyadake Mountain, keeping the remaining snow in mind.

I expected to be asked to bow politely upon passing the Kayano Nino Torii Shrine Gate at the third station, but it seemed that gravel had accumulated. Past here, I found the remains of burned wood from the Ojinaobana Buddhist vernal equinox memorial service, where ancestors' spirits are consoled by lighting fires along the Yakushi Shrine slope. Yakushi Shrine, said to be a place where a prince's nanny died from grief following his death, is believed to be help with eye diseases - and thus, I found myself also praying for that. I realized that this mountain has

been loved by local people for its legend and religious faith.

I enjoyed the beech trees and beautiful scenery that came just after the seventh station. I hope to return here during the lush greenery and autumn foliage seasons. It was very funny that the Gakkari Ridge ("gakkari" meaning to let you down) actually led me to find a different summit spot, where I overlooked an unparalleled view, seeing Kawanagedake Mountain, Mt. Moriyoshi, and Mt. Hakkoda, all from the top of the mountain.



ACCESS

Take the National Route 282 from Hanawa District in Kazuno City to the former Hachimantai Citizen Center which is adjacent to JR Hachimantai Station to proceed under the Tohoku Express Highway. Trekking starting point is situated in Shirinashizawa, which prohibits cars from entering further.