

Japan's Forests with Breathtaking Views: Selections from the Tourist Destinations in National Forest

Forests have provided both mankind – and indeed all living things – with safety, sustenance and security for an eternity. The lush greenery and gentle breeze of the forest is surely enough to rekindle nature's vigor in any soul.

With more than 70% of Japan landmass covered in abundant greenery, the Forestry Agency is working to create "Recreation Forests" to inspire as many as possible to rediscover the wonder of nature.

The best forests to visit have been carefully selected and compiled as "Japan's Forests with Breathtaking Views."

Know before You Visit: General rules for visitors

- 1 Help protect wild animals and plants. When you bring your pets, please mind your manners and give consideration to the surrounding environment.
- 2 Damaging trees or stealing any forest product is penalized by law. Even collecting plants covering the ground of forest are prohibited within protection forests designated by law.
- 3 Do not enter the area beyond walking trails, or public squares. Please follow the rules for each Recreation Forest such as no camping outside the designated area.
- 4 Do not enter the area with 'No Entry' or 'Keep Out' sign.
- 5 When making a stop for rest or any other purposes, please look around and confirm that the area is safe without any risk of being hit by falling branches or rocks.
- 6 Enjoy mountaineering on your own responsibility. Please ensure that you submit your plan for mountaineering to a police station in the area as well as to your family members, your friends or colleagues after checking out climate and other necessary information for mountaineering and fully being equipped. Please also fill in 'the Name List of Climbers and Visitors', which is placed at the mountain entrance.
- 7 Do not enter forests under bad weather conditions.
- 8 Do not dispose of any leftover food in the forest. Please take your garbage home with you.
- 9 Smoking is permitted only in special areas. Make sure to extinguish any fires, e.g. after smoking cigarettes.
- 10 Mountain paths are potentially dangerous to walk. Do not use smartphone while walking. When taking photos, please remain fully aware of your surroundings and do not bother other visitors in any way.
- 11 If you wish to use an unmanned aerial vehicle (drone), you need to submit prior written notice to District Forest Office. Please contact the nearest Regional Forest Office or District Forest Office of national forest beforehand.

Kanokozawa Recreation Forest Access Map



Access

By public transport:

- About 60 minutes on foot (4.5km) from the Katsuyama Onsen bus stop (Kitami Bus)
 - Kitami Station (Kitami Bus [Kunneppu-Oketo-Katsuyama-Rikubetsu route]: 60 minutes) → get off at the Katsuyama Onsen bus stop
- * Due to inconvenient access by public transportation, access by car is recommended.

By car:

- From Memanbetsu Airport, take the Bihoro By-pass and drive through Kitami City (Route 39, Pref. Route 50, etc.: about 90 minutes) → Oketo Town downtown (Pref. Route 211, etc.: about 30 minutes) → Kanoko Recreation Forest Parking Lot

Kanokozawa Recreation Forest

Address : Tsunemoto, Oketo Town, Tokoro County, Hokkaido Prefecture

Management office contact details:
Abashiri Chubu District Forest Office
FAX : 0 157-52-3014

Oketoko/Kanokozawa Recreation Forests Management Committee
(Industry Promotion Division, Oketo Municipal Office)
FAX : 0 157-52-3353

National Forest Planning Division,
Forestry Agency, MAFF

The Official Recreation Forests Website of the Forestry Agency
http://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/e/national_forest/recreation_forest/index.html



 Recreation
Forests of JAPAN

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KANOKOZAWA

Recreation Forest



Recreation Forests
Forestry Agency

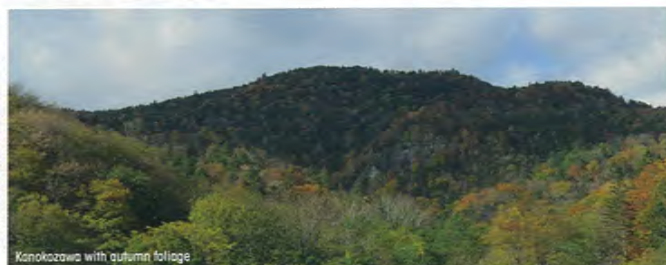
Kanokozawa: a place of truly outstanding natural beauty

Kanokozawa Recreation Forest Map



Geographical / topographical features

The Kanokozawa Recreation Forest is located in Oketo Town in the northeastern part of Hokkaido. The forest occupies a hilly region with an average elevation of 450 m, forming a ridge that branches out from the Daisetsu Mountains along the Nii-Tokoro River upstream from the Tokoro River.



Historical / cultural features

Locals have long considered Kanokozawa to be one of Oketo Town's most noteworthy scenic locales. It is said to have been given its current, official name around 1950.

Oketo Town requested that a songwriter—Mr. Otowa Shigure—visit the town and give a lecture. He was taken to see the waterfalls and rocks of the stream, which had no name at the time. After Mr. Shigure returned to Tokyo, he sent a poem entitled "Kanokogawa" (Kanoko River) to Oketo Town. Names such as "Niji Falls" (rainbow waterfall), "Sanbon Katsura" (three-part Katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*)), "Shinobi Iwa" (sneaking rock), "Kumo Tsuki Iwa" (cloud piercing rock) and "Itohiki Falls" (thread-like waterfall) are derived from this poem, and the place was given the name "Kanokozawa" (Kanoko Stream) as a scenic site. (Source: Oketo-cho 100 Shunen Kinen Yorari (Handbook Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Oketo Town))



Climate, flora and fauna

The area has a Sea of Okhotsk climate and a subarctic inland climate, with a relatively hot summer and severe cold in the winter due to drift ice arriving along the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk.

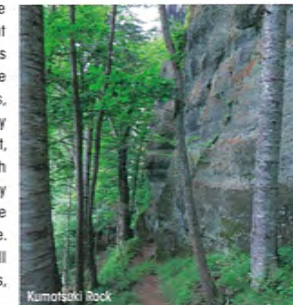
Therefore, the forest is composed of subarctic coniferous trees such as Todomatsu (Todo fir (*Abies sachalinensis*)) and Akazomatsu (Sakhalin spruce (*Picea glehnii*)), and broad-leaved trees such as Shinanoki (Japanese lime tree (*Tilia japonica*)), Harunire (Japanese Elm (*Ulmus davidiana* var. *japonica*)), Mizunara (Japanese oak mizu-nara (*Quercus crispula* Blume)) and Betulaceae. The forest also provides a habitat for clusters of Hakusanshakunage (*Rhododendron brachycarpum* G. Don) and wildlife such as Ezoshika (Yezo shika deer (*Cervus nippon yezoensis*)) and Ezoraicha (hazel grouse (*Tetrastes bonasia*)).



Attractions

Many people visit the Kanokozawa Recreation Forest to enjoy the forest scenery with its mix of conifers and broad-leaved trees, which is magnificent when viewed in panorama from the summit observation platform, particularly when the bright green new leaves emerge in the spring and during the autumn, when the leaves change color.

Along a footpath that takes about 90 minutes roundtrip, many unusually shaped natural rocks can be seen, such as the Byobu Iwa (folding screen rock), which looks like a folding screen made of stone, Shinobi Iwa, which has a space large enough for a person to hide in between giant overlapping rocks, and Kumatsuki Iwa, which rises so high that it seems to pierce the sky. Along the stream winding between these unusual rocks, there is the Niji Falls, a waterfall that looks very different depending on the season and viewpoint, and Itohiki Falls, which looks like fine threads with water sliding down the rock surface gently, hardly making a splash. These features combine with the surrounding forest to create a superb landscape. The valley contains the Sanbon Katsura, a very tall Katsura tree that splits into thirds near its roots, which is on the "100 Giants of the Forest" list.



Information

- Elevation(m) 390–820
- Area (ha) 291.32
- Entrance fee Free
- Opening seasons Basically accessible 24 hours a day. However, please refrain from entering the forest at night as there are rocky areas and wild animals. The forest is closed during the winter (November to May).
- Accommodation options Oketo Katsuyamaonsen Yuuyu Cottage (5 km, about 6 minutes by car), the Youth Exchange Center (only offers stays without meals, reservation required), Minshuku Jukoen (guest house) (about 17 km, about 25 minutes by car) (April through November)
- Car parking capacity / parking charges Free parking for approximately 10 vehicles