

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. Check avalanche risks before mountaineering or skiing in winter.
- 7 Do not enter forests under bad weather conditions.
- 8 In order to prevent the spread of CSF through food residues, please make sure to take your garbage home with you. We are also taking measures such as removing trash bins.
- 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.

Kariba-yama (Mt. Kariba) Recreation Forest Access Map



Access

By car	Kurumatsunai JCT		Chihase-Shindo Course Trailhead
	Sapporo Sta.	Hokkaido EXPWY About 2 hr	
New Chitose Airport	Hokkaido EXPWY About 1 hr 30 min		
Kunnuui IC	Sapporo Sta.	Hokkaido EXPWY About 2 hr 30 min	Makomanai Course Trailhead
	New Chitose Airport/ Hakodate Sta.	Hokkaido EXPWY About 2 hr	
	Shin-Hakodate- Hokuto Sta.	Hokkaido EXPWY About 1 hr 40 min	Motta Course Trailhead

* The Recreation Forest is not accessible using public transportation, so please come by car.

Kariba-yama (Mt. Kariba) Recreation Forest

Location : Shimamaki Village, Shimamaki County /
Setana Town, Kudo County, Hokkaido

Management office contact details :
Shiribeshi District Forest Office
FAX : 0136-22-0106
Oshima District Forest Office
FAX : 0137-62-2961

National Forest Planning Division,
Forestry Agency, MAFF

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



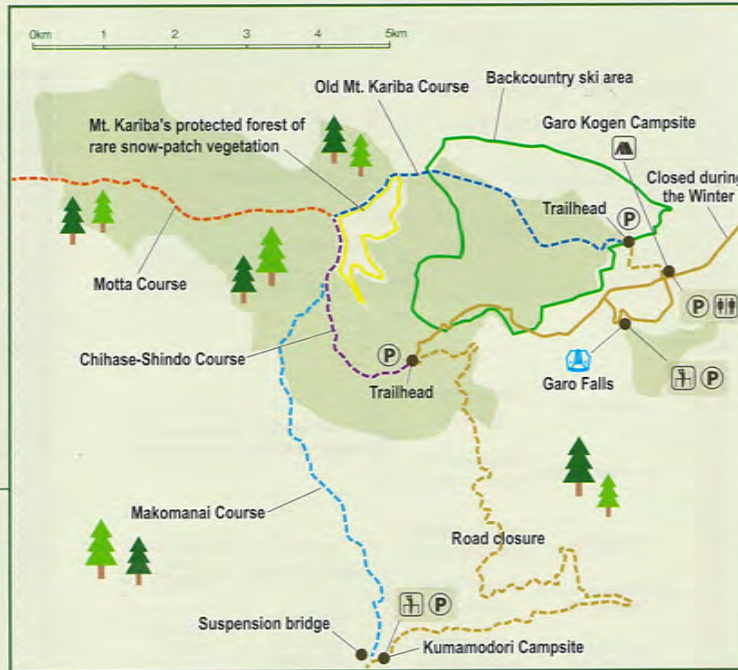
Mt. KARIBA

Recreation Forest



Mt. Kariba surrounded by a vast primeval Japanese beech forest and a gorge full of natural splendor

Kariba-yama (Mt. Kariba) Recreation Forest Map



Climate/ flora and fauna

The area is on the Sea of Japan side of Hokkaido, where strong seasonal winds blow in the winter. As the Recreation Forest is located at high elevation and receives heavy snowfall, unmelted snow lingers even in the summer. The forest is also known as a treasure house of alpine plants. Near the summit of Mt. Kariba around August, you can see meadows filled with various blooming alpine plants, such as Iwaicho (deercabbage (*Nephrophyllidium crista-galli*)), Ukonotsugi (*Weigela middendorffiana*), Karamatsuso (*Thalictrum aquilegifolium*), Kibanashakunage (*Rhododendron aureum*), Chinguruma (Aleutian avens (*Geum penlapetalum*)), Kokemomo (lingonberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea* L.)), Miyamakinpige (*Ranunculus acris* var. *nipponicus*) and Miyakinbai (*Potentilla matsumurae*).



Ezonokongjiku flowers

Attractions

The summit of Mt. Kariba offers a splendid 360° panoramic view, with Cape Motta facing the Sea of Japan and the Oshima Peninsula and Okushiri Island in the distance. Many hikers come from all over Japan to enjoy the magnificent view and the flowers in the alpine meadows. A particularly popular sight is the mystic scenery of Okotsunai Pond on Mt. Okotsunai to the northwest of Mt. Kariba and the beautiful forest reflected on the pond's surface. In addition, Garo Falls in Garo Kogen is said to be the best waterfall in Hokkaido and gives the impression of a deep mountain valley. The approximately 4 km Chihase-Shindo Course is a relatively easy course among the Mt. Kariba hiking courses. Hikers can find snow covering the gorge as late as July. The hike offers a pleasant walk among the flowering alpine meadows and view of both Oyanuma Pond (parent pond) and Konuma Pond (child pond) around the ninth station. The Makomanai Course is about 8 km long. When hikers cross a suspension bridge over the Makomanai River and reach the ridge, they enter a vast primeval Japanese beech forest. After climbing up 3 steep slopes, the forest transitions to a Daikakanba (Eman's birch (*Betula emani*)) forest, and the view opens up to a gorge that is still covered in snow until July. The longer 14 km Motta Course is recommended as a descent. Motta Konuma Pond along the way provides a nice resting place, but caution is required as Higuma (Ezo brown bears (*Ursus arctos*)) are sometimes found in the area. Shimamaki Village's cat ski tours on the slopes of Mt. Higashi-Kariba (contact: Shimamaki Municipal Office 0136-75-6211) attract skiers from overseas seeking excellent powder snow, including skiers from the United States and Europe.



Garo Kogen Campsite

Geographical/ topographical features

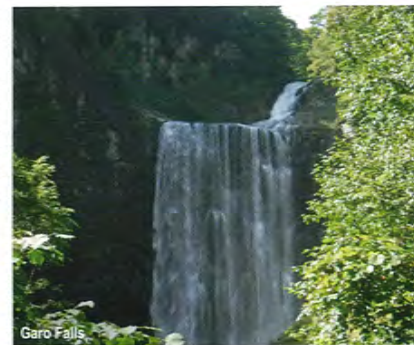
The Recreation Forest covers part of the Kariba Mountain Range, including Mt. Kariba, which lies between Setana Town and Shimamaki Village and has the highest elevation in southern Hokkaido. The area generally has steep topography. Mt. Kariba is an andesitic stratovolcano that was active 800,000 to 250,000 years ago. Garo Kogen spreads across the foot of the mountain and contains Garo Falls, which has been selected as one of Japan's 100 best waterfalls. In addition, many vacationers visit a nearby campsite in the summer.



Oyanuma Pond

Historical/ cultural features

"Kariba" is said to be derived from "karinpa-us," which means "a place with a lot of cherry (bark)" in the Ainu language. Mt. Kariba is one of the 300 Famous Japanese Mountains. Records indicate that mountaineers used skis to first reach the peak of Mt. Higashi-Kariba in 1928. Since then, many climbing routes have been developed. The entire area is within Kariba-Motta Prefectural Natural Park.



Garo Falls

Information

▪ Elevation (m)	500 - 1,520
▪ Area (ha)	2,248.23
▪ Entrance fee	None for the Recreation Forest itself
▪ Opening seasons	Basically accessible 24 hours a day. However, the forest road becomes impassable during the winter.
▪ Accommodation options	[In the direction of Shimamaki Village] 20 km (about 50 minutes by car) to Japanese inns and guest houses in Shimamaki Village [In the direction of Setana Town] 20 km (about 50 minutes by car) to hotels, Japanese inns and guest houses in Setana Town
▪ Car parking capacity / parking charges	I Makomanai Course Trailhead: Free parking for 20 ordinary vehicles Motta Course Trailhead: Free parking for 20 ordinary vehicles