

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."

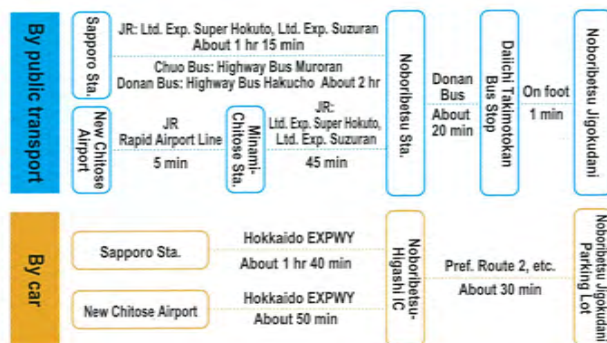
Know before You Visit: General rules for visitors

- 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.

Noboribetsu-Onsen Recreation Forest Access Map



Access



Noboribetsu-Onsen Recreation Forest

Location : Noboribetsu Onsen, Noboribetsu City, Hokkaido

Management office contact details :
Shiribeshi District Forest Office
FAX : 0136-22-0106

National Forest Planning Division,
Forestry Agency, MAFF

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



NOBORIBETSU-ONSEN

Recreation Forest



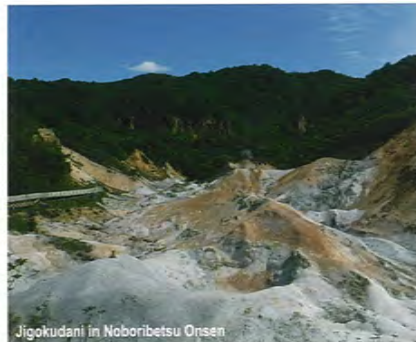
A wonderland of attractions and onsen with valleys, ponds, fumaroles and Ezo brown bears

Noboribetsu-Onsen Recreation Forest Map



Geographical/ topographical features

The Recreation Forest is located in a valley encompassing central Noboribetsu City near the coast and Mt. Hiyori, Jigokudani, Oyunuma, etc. in the northern and more mountainous area. The entire area is within Shikotsu-Toya National Park.



Historical/ cultural features

"Noboribetsu" is said to be derived from "nupunu-petsu," which means "a milky-colored river or a deep-colored river" in the Ainu language.

Noboribetsu Onsen is believed to have traditionally been treasured by the Ainu people for its medicinal properties. In 1845, Takeshiro Matsuura, who is said to have named Hokkaido, visited the hot springs and wrote about his fascination with them. Noboribetsu Onsen was designated as a health resort for sick and wounded soldiers during the Russo-Japanese War in early 20th century. As a result, a railway was constructed and various facilities were established to take advantage of the area's abundant and highly varied hot spring water, including the Noboribetsu Branch of the Medical Faculty Hospital under the Hokkaido Imperial University School of Medicine. It is also known to have been visited by the Emperor. As the Recreation Forest surrounds the hot spring resort, it is a popular recreational area for people visiting the hot springs.



Climate/ flora and fauna

The area receives little snowfall and has a mild climate for Hokkaido.

The Recreation Forest comprises the Noboribetsu Primeval Forest, which was designated a natural monument in 1924 and where about 60 varieties of trees including Mizunara (Japanese oak mizu-nara (*Quercus crispula* Blume)) and about 110 varieties of herbs such as Miyamatankusiko (*Galium nakaii* Kudo) grow wild.



Attractions

At Noboribetsu Onsen, about 10,000 tons of hot water with a springhead temperature of 45–90°C naturally gushes out of the ground daily. In addition to its abundance, the hot spring water also boasts a wide range of qualities. It is extremely rare to have nine types of spring water anywhere in the world, leading some to refer to Noboribetsu Onsen as a "department store of hot springs." Recently, it has been gaining in popularity not only among Japanese tourists, but also with foreign tourists, and the number of visitors has been growing every year. Jigokudani ("hell valley") is a remnant of a volcanic explosion crater and contains Noboribetsu Onsen's largest springhead area with a diameter of about 450 m. The white fumes rising from Mt. Hiyori, a nearby active volcano, and the billowing steam from Oyunuma ("large hot-water pond")—formed by the eruption—create hell-like scenery. The primeval Recreation Forest surrounding the valley makes this mysterious spectacle stand out.

In addition, visitors can take a 15-minute ride on Noboribetsu Onsen Ropeway to Noboribetsu Bear Park where they can try feeding powerful Higuma (Ezo brown bears (*Ursus arctos*)).



Information

- Elevation (m) 200 - 550
- Area (ha) 462.34
- Entrance fee None for the Recreation Forest itself or the Noboribetsu Park Service Center
Noboribetsu Bear Park: Adults 2,600 yen, Children 1,300 yen, Children 3 years of age or younger are free
* The ropeway fee is included in the bear park entrance fee.
- Opening seasons Accessible 24 hours a day, 365 day a year.
- Operation hours by staff Noboribetsu Park Service Center:
8:00 am - 6:00 pm during the summer (May through October)
8:00 am - 5:00 pm during the winter (November through April)
- Accommodation options [Inside the forest] None
[Outside the forest] There are many hot spring inns nearby.
- Car parking capacity / parking charges - Noboribetsu Jigokudani Parking Lot No. 1:
Paid parking for 14 large vehicles and 60 ordinary vehicles (Large buses: 2,000 yen per day, Ordinary vehicles: 500 yen per day)
- Noboribetsu Jigokudani Parking Lot No. 2:
Paid parking for 70 ordinary vehicles (Large buses: 2,000 yen per day, Ordinary vehicles: 500 yen per day)
- Oyunuma Parking Lot (closed during the winter):
Paid parking for 1 large vehicle and 39 ordinary vehicles (Microbuses: 1,000 yen per day, Ordinary vehicles: 500 yen per day)