

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."

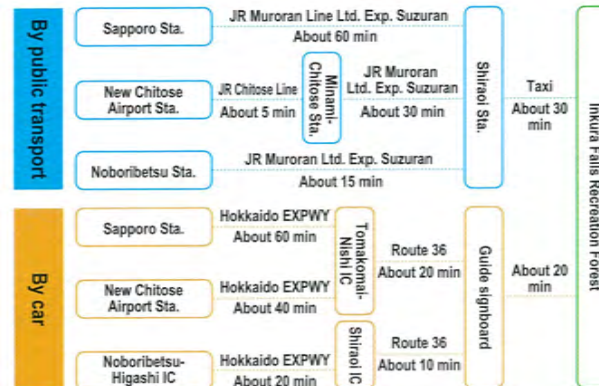
Know before You Visit: General rules for visitors

- 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.

Inkura-no-Taki (Inkura Falls) Recreation Forest Access Map



Access



Inkura-no-Taki (Inkura Falls) Recreation Forest

Location : Shadai, Shiraoi Town, Shiraoi County, Hokkaido

Management office contact details :
Iburi Tobu District Forest Office
FAX : 0144-82-2163

Shiraoi District Recreation Forest Management Committee
(Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Division, Shiraoi Municipal Office)
FAX : 0144-82-4391

**National Forest Planning Division,
Forestry Agency, MAFF**

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



INKURA FALLS

Recreation Forest

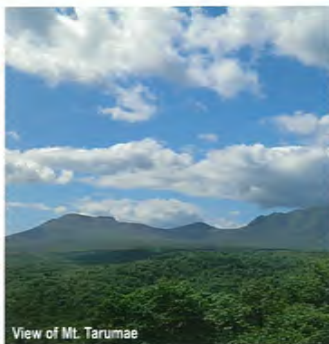


Magnificent waterfall in Shiraoi that cascades from a deep forest over a sheer cliff that towers above like a castle wall



Geographical/ topographical features

At the foot of Mt. Tarumae, close to the headwaters of the Betsubetsu River that flows into the Pacific Ocean near Shadai in Shiraoi Town, there is a vast, nearly flat plateau, commonly known as the Shadai Plateau. This entire area is said to have been formed by wave erosion when the land was uplifted from the sea by tectonic forces. Inkura Falls is located on a vertical cliff at the southern edge of the Shadai Plateau. The spectacular waterfall is about 44 m high and about 10 m wide, with abundant water, and has been selected as one of Japan's 100 best waterfalls. It is also called Betsubetsu Falls by locals.



View of Mt. Tarumae

Historical/ cultural features

Inkura Falls is said to have been named after a facility called an incline* that was at one time installed on the Shadai Plateau to transport timber from trees such as Ezomatsu (Yezo spruce (*Picea jezoensis*)), Todomatsu (Todo fir (*Abies sachalinensis*)) and Mizunara (Japanese oak *mizu-nara* (*Quercus crispula* Blume)) to the bottom of the steep cliff. *A system that made use of the weight of downward moving loaded handcars to raise unloaded handcars. As the incline was difficult to operate, it was closed, and the equipment was removed in 1944. Since then, timber has been transported using forest roads.



Incline facility in the old days

Climate/ flora and fauna

The climate in the Iburi region is relatively mild compared to other parts of Hokkaido. Spring arrives earlier in the region and it experiences cool summers and refreshing and stable autumn weather.

In this area, the abundant underground water has slowly percolated through the thick volcanic ash layers that have accumulated from Mt. Tarumae's past eruptions, leaving it clean and clear. Evergreen trees such as Ezomatsu and Todomatsu and broad-leaved trees including Nara (oak (*Quercus*)), Itaya (painted maple (*Acer mono Maxim.*)), Katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum* Siebold et Zucc. ex Hoffm. et Schult.) and Harunire (Japanese Elm (*Ulmus davidiana* var. *japonica*)) grow on the surrounding cliffs and gorges. The clear surface of the water reflects their changing seasonal colors.



Inkura Falls in summer

Attractions

Inkura Falls is relatively easy to reach from New Chitose Airport, Sapporo and also from the Tomakomai West Port Ferry Terminal. The waterfall fascinates visitors by changing with the seasons and makes a powerful impression that conveys the dynamism of nature.

There are also a variety of tourist sites nearby, such as the National Ainu Museum and Park (to open in 2020), which introduces Ainu culture, Mt. Tarumae, with its mountain hiking trails, a broad range of food-related spots offering local specialties made from freshly harvested ingredients and the Kojohama Onsen hot springs, which boast some of the most plentiful hot spring water in Hokkaido. Foodies can try the exquisite local Shiraoi Beef—world renowned for its smooth, rich flavor—for reasonable prices at restaurants in the town.



Smoldering Mt. Tarumae

Information

- Elevation (m) 110 - 250
- Area (ha) 27.05
- Entrance fee Free
- Opening seasons Accessible 24 hours a day, 365 day a year.
Accessible 24 hours a day, but nighttime visits are not recommended as there are no lights or staffed facilities and the forest is home to many dangerous animals, including Higuma (Ezo brown bears (*Ursus arctos*)). In winter (from November until around April), the Town Road Futamata Line becomes impassable due to snowfall.
- Accommodation options About 15 km (about 30 minutes) to three inns, etc. in Shiraoi Town. About 35 km (about 50 minutes) to 11 inns and hotels in Kojohama Onsen.
- Car parking capacity / parking charges Inkura Falls Parking Lot: Free parking for about 10 vehicles