

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.

Omi-Konan Alps Recreation Forest Access Map



Access

By public transport:

- Kusatsu Station (Biwako Line) → Kamikiryu (Teisan Konan Kotsu Bus : approx. 30 minutes) → Omi-Konan Alps Recreation Forest
- Tehara Station (Kusatsu Line) → Konshoji (Konze Megurichan Bus*: approx. 40 minutes)
*Operates on weekends and national holidays only, April – June and September – November, 3 round-trips per day. For more information please contact: Ritto City Sightseeing & Product Association FAX : 077-551-6158.

By car:

- From Kamikiryu of Otsu-city : Shin-Meishin Expressway Kusatsu-Tanakami IC → Ichijoya Parking Lot (approx. 10 minutes)
- From Konshoji Temple of Ritto-city : Meishin Expressway Ritto IC (approx. 20 minutes) → Konze-no-Sato Ritto Roadside Station (approx. 15 minutes) → Yokogamine Viewing spot - Bato Kannon Hall (parking lot)

Omi-Konan Alps Recreation Forest

Address : Kamitana-kamikiryu-cho, Otsu-shi; Arahari, Ritto-shi, Shiga Prefecture

Management office contact details:
Shiga District Forest Office
FAX : 077-544-3867

Omi-Konan Alps Recreation Forest Management Committee

(Administration Bureau: Commerce, Industry, and Tourism Department, Ritto City Office)
FAX : 077-551-0148
Ritto City <http://www.city.ritto.lg.jp/>

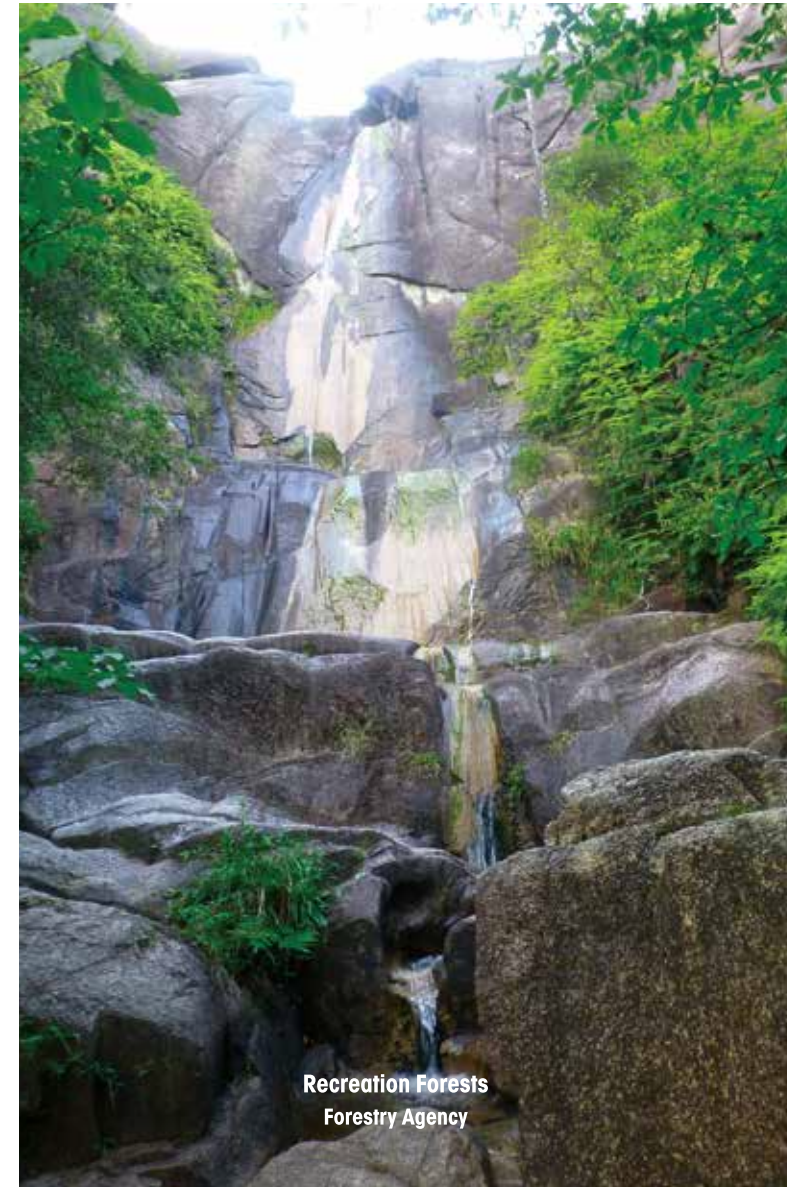
National Forest Planning Division, Forestry Agency, MAFF

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



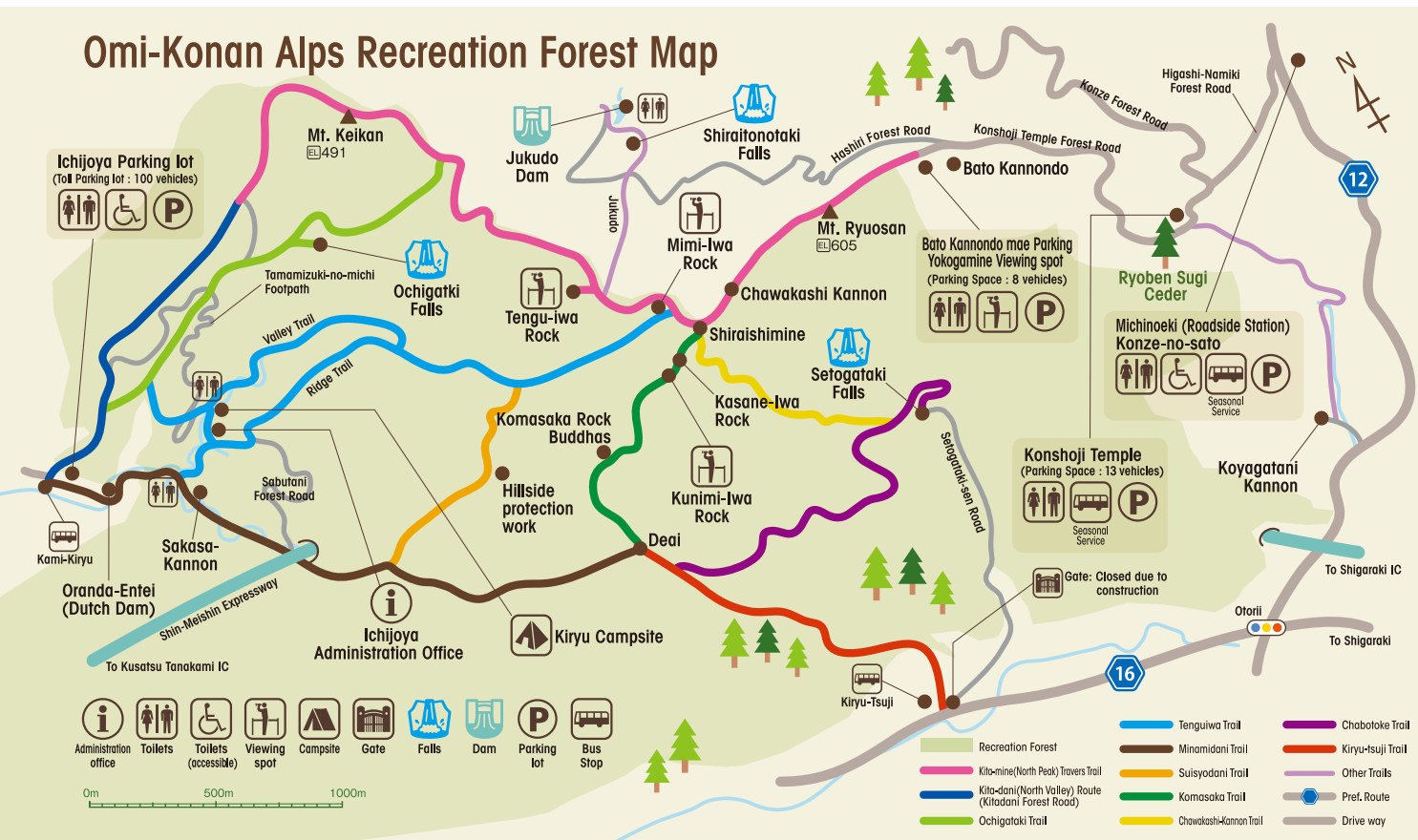
OMI-KONAN ALPS

Recreation Forest



Alpine scenery featuring huge, strangely-shaped granite boulders and panoramic views of Lake Biwa

Omi-Konan Alps Recreation Forest Map



Climate, flora and fauna

Deforestation that began centuries ago led to the disappearance of the area's native vegetation, so the forest here mainly consists of akamatsu, Japanese red pine (*Pinus densiflora*), many of which were planted as part of afforestation initiatives on the bare mountain from the late 19th century onward. Among the plants in the forest's substratum are kobanomitsuba-itsutsuji (*Rhododendron reticulatum*); nejiki (*Lyonia ovalifolia* ssp. *Neziki*); ryubu (*Clethra barbinervis*); ganpi (*Diplomorpha sikokiana*); and hisakaki (*Eurya japonica*). Nihonrisu, Japanese squirrel (*Sciurus lis*) can often be spotted munching on pinecones.



Benidoudan (*Enkianthus cernuus* f. *rubens*)

Attractions

- There are many hiking trails suitable for everyone from novices to those with some hiking experience, which are also open in winter, too.
- Everyone from small children to adults can enjoy playing in the stream near Ichijoya Parking Lot. Barbecues are permitted at the campsite.
- Visitors can explore rock Buddhas and other elements of Buddhist culture, and reflect on more modern industrial heritage.



Playing in the water near Dutch Dam

Geographical/ topographical features

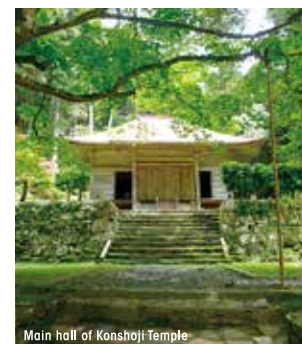
Located in southern Shiga Prefecture, this area is known as the "Konan Alps" due to the distinctive form of its clusters of granite rock masses. It offers stunning panoramic views all the way to Lake Biwa.



Strangely-shaped granite boulders

Historical/ cultural features

Attractions of historical and cultural interest in and around the Recreation Forest include Konshoji Temple, which was founded in the Nara period and played a key role in Buddhist culture during the Heian period; and a number of rock Buddhas (images of the Buddha carved into towering natural cliff faces, exposed rock, or boulders), including the Komasaka Rock Buddhas, which are said to have been carved sometime between the late Nara period and the Heian period. The forest in this area began to be felled to provide wood for building the capital over 1,000 years ago, which, along with excessive felling of trees for fuel, led to this becoming renowned nationwide as an entirely bare mountain by the Edo period. The forest was subsequently regenerated through erosion control projects that began in the Meiji period. A Dutch-style dike built in 1889 under the guidance of the Dutch engineer Johannes de Rijke is still in good condition today.



Main hall of Konshoji Temple

Information

- Elevation (m) 170–600
 - Area (ha) 1,136.38
 - Entrance fee Free
 - Opening seasons Accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
 - Accommodation options Konze-no-Sato (Shinyukan, Cabin area, Mori-no-miraikan) is open 9:00–17:00 (closed Wednesdays), Kiryu Campsite
 - Car parking capacity / parking charges [Ichijoya] 100 standard-sized cars, 5 large vehicles (Pay)
[Bato Kannondo mae] 8 standard-sized cars (Free of charge)
- ※ For more information please contact: Omi-Konan Alps Recreation Forest Management Committee (Administration Bureau: Commerce, Industry, and Tourism Department, Ritto City Office 077-551-0148)