

A Land Born from Volcanoes

Where two tectonic plates meet there is often geophysical activity. Japan lies at the confluence of three major plates—the Eurasian, North American, and Pacific—so it is no surprise to find substantial volcanic activity in this country. Hokkaido, and especially Shikotsu-Toya National Park, is no exception; within the park's boundaries are multiple volcanoes of different ages. Two of them (Mount Usu and Mount Tarumae) remain active, the former of which has erupted twice within living memory. It is this close relationship with volcanic activity that has created the awesome natural wonder of this region. Three stunningly beautiful lakes—Shikotsu, Toya, and Kuttara—are caldera lakes, formed in the craters of ancient volcanoes. Furthermore, the many hot springs in the park are a result of water being naturally heated in subterranean magma furnaces and pushed up to the surface. Truly, this land would not be as beautiful as it is without its rich volcanic history.