

Noboribetsu-Lake Kuttara Area

Heaven and Hell

One of the most renowned hot springs in Japan, Noboribetsu is a magnet for visitors. The big attraction is *Jigokudani* (Hell Valley), with its long stretch of featureless moonscape, complete with steam vents and bubbling pools of boiling water. Behind Hell Valley is Oyunuma, a steaming, shallow, hot water pond. Nearby, along a forested path, the same water mixes with the cooler water of a river to create a comfortable footbath. On the far side of the valley lies Lake Kuttara, sister to lakes Toya and Shikotsu. Kuttara is a small, round caldera lake of clear, blue water. It is hard to imagine that this beautiful scene and the barren, steaming landscape of Hell Valley are both the result of volcanic activity.