

Lake Onneto Walking Trails

There are four walking trails around Lake Onneto, covering the lakeside and the base of Mt. Meakan. The trails highlight different points of interest in the area: diverse forests, a geothermal waterfall, a hike to a lookout with views of Mt. Meakan and Lake Onneto, and a stroll along the lakeshore.

Meakan Onsen Trail

This trail stretches from Meakan Onsen to Lake Onneto, and takes about 50 minutes from start to finish. It merges with the Onneto East Bank Trail, which follows the lakeshore.

From Meakan Onsen, the path winds through a forest of Sakhalin spruce, one of very few species that can grow in the nutrient-deficient volcanic soil at the base of Mt. Meakan. As the path leads away from Meakan Onsen and closer to the lake, hardwoods and other conifers come into view alongside the Sakhalin spruces. As the soil becomes more nutrient rich, the ratio of broad-leaved trees increases, and ferns, mosses, and mushrooms can be seen on the forest floor.

Onneto Yunotaki Falls Trail

The main draw of this trail is the trickling waterfall known as Onneto Yunotaki Falls, which is fed with geothermal water from a natural spring. At the source, the temperature of the water is about 40°C, but it becomes tepid as it trickles over the rocks, stained black from manganese oxide, and down into the pool at the bottom.

Yunotaki Falls is one of a handful of places in the world where manganese oxide, a rare earth mineral used to make iron and dry cell batteries, occurs naturally above ground; manganese ore is normally found deep beneath the sea floor. The manganese oxide at Yunotaki Falls is the result of a rare combination of minerals from the hot spring, manganese-oxidizing bacteria, and filamentous algae. The falls were designated a National Natural Monument in 2000.

The path to the falls starts at Onneto Campground and follows a wide, flat, forest road. Wildlife such as birds, squirrels, and deer may be encountered along the way. The round-trip walk takes about one hour and 20 minutes.

Onneto Lookout Trail

The Onneto Lookout Trail winds through a rugged forest of broad-leaved trees and conifers. Wild birds and squirrels are visible along the trail. After 800 meters, there is a rest area with views of Lake Onneto, Mt. Meakan, and Mt. Akanfuji. The walk takes a total of 40 minutes.

Onneto East Bank Trail

This trail runs along the eastern shore of Lake Onneto and offers views of the lake as it passes through a mixed forest of moss-covered trees. There is a spot on the trail where the rust-colored waters of Nishiki Pond flow into Lake Onneto, contrasting with the lake's brilliant blue. In May, white-flowering Asian skunk cabbage (*mizubasho*) can be seen along the path. It takes 40 minutes to walk the trail from start to finish.