

## **Explore Teshikaga's Great Outdoors on Foot**

A large section of the town of Teshikaga lies within the boundaries of the Akan-Mashu National Park, a vast area of jagged, volcanic terrain, huge caldera lakes, and unspoiled natural beauty. Both short nature trails and challenging hiking paths are available, allowing family groups and experienced hikers alike to enjoy Teshikaga's great outdoors on foot.

### *Nature trails*

The Tsutsujigahara Nature Trail and Sakhalin Spruce Nature Trail begin at the Kawayu Ecomuseum Center, a museum and visitor center that introduces the history and nature of Akan-Mashu National Park. The Sakhalin Spruce Nature Trail is a 60-minute walk among the towering Sakhalin spruce trees that are native to Hokkaido. The trail is ideal for families, as it is safe for young children to run freely and offers plenty of interesting discoveries, including the boat-shaped holes in the trunks of the trees that show black woodpeckers have been feeding there.

The Tsutsujigahara Nature Trail is a 2.5-kilometer trail that stretches from the ecomuseum to the base of Mt. Io—an active volcano with barren slopes, steam vents, and bright yellow sulfur deposits. The plant life changes dramatically along the trail, from verdant forest to fields of alpine vegetation, including the stubby Japanese stone pine and Labrador tea plants.

### *Hiking trails*

There are a number of hiking trails of varying lengths in and around Teshikaga. The trail around the Wakoto Peninsula is an up-and-down course that passes through a forest of giant Katsura trees and areas of intense geothermal activity. It takes around two hours to complete. The Skyline Trail at Mt. Mokoto is a mid-level hike through corridors of Japanese stone pines. The summit of the mountain overlooks Lake Kussharo, offering unrivaled views of this enormous caldera lake. The trail to Mt. Mashu is a challenging hike that follows the caldera rim of Lake Mashu.