

【Yakebitaiyama Tozan Course】

The Yakebitaiyama Tozan Course is an intermediate mountain trail that runs from the Prince Hotel Mae bus stop to the Okushiga Kōgen Hotel bus stop. The trail rises 400 meters in elevation over a distance of 7 kilometers and requires a little over two hours to complete.

The course climbs to the summit of Mt. Yakebitai (2,009 m), which offers views of grass-covered ski slopes in summer and colorful red and gold foliage in autumn. Also visible are the mirror-like waters of Chigo Pond in a small caldera at the top of the mountain. A wooden *torii* gate stands at the water's edge, marking a small stone shrine. Although the gate stands about 3 meters high, coins have mysteriously been wedged into the top beam. In winter, the accumulated snowfall brings the gate beam within reach, and snowshoers and backcountry skiers can easily press coins into the wood.

The trail also winds through many lush groves of Maries' fir (*Abies mariesii*), which is recognizable by the purplish cones that jut out from its boughs. The sap of Maries' fir and other closely related trees like Veitch's silver fir has a sharp, lemony scent, similar to citronella, and can be rubbed onto the wrists and temples to repel mosquitos.