

Hiking the Northern Alps

Chubusangaku National Park welcomes hikers to a majestic alpine landscape of towering peaks, snowy slopes, clear mountain streams, and diverse seasonal varieties of plant and animal life. The park offers a well-developed system of trails and mountain huts and challenging routes. It is home to 10 of Japan's 21 peaks over 3,000 meters. The tallest is Mt. Oku-Hotakadake, the third-highest mountain in Japan at 3,190 meters, and the most recognizable is Mt. Yarigatake, whose 3,180-meter peak is said to resemble the Matterhorn. Mt. Tsubakuro, at 2,763 meters, is popular with novice hikers. Most of the summits are accessible, depending on one's level of expertise, the time of year, and the weather conditions.

The following is a guide to hiking the mountains of the national park. Hikers are urged to check the latest trail and weather conditions thoroughly and gather as much information as possible before setting out. The local tourist associations are reliable sources of information, as are the local visitor centers. Hiking guides, some of them multilingual, can make the experience more enjoyable by sharing with you local customs, route information, safety hints and knowledge of the natural environment.