

Mt. Yakedake

Mt. Yakedake, literally “burning mountain,” is a twin-peaked volcano close to the central Kamikochi area. It is still active and gives off plumes of steam. A major eruption in 1915 helped shape the current landscape of Kamikochi, causing a landslide which dammed the V-shaped Azusa River to create Taisho Pond. Mud and silt from the eruption is still dredged from the pond every year. Lava flows left long scars along the side of the mountain, which are still visible from below.

The north peak is relatively easy to hike despite the volcanic activity, and the return hike from Kamikochi is a particularly popular day trip. Reaching the 2,444-meter-high summit takes around four hours, with three hours needed to return. The forest at the base of the trailheads eventually gives way to rocky terrain and steam-spouting vents at higher elevations. Climbing the south peak is prohibited.