

Recommended Hikes

Daisetsuzan National Park offers extensive hiking routes that lead through lush wetlands, past mossy forests, and over rugged volcanic peaks. The 300 kilometers of trails throughout the park offer something to suit every hiker. Beginners and families can enjoy leisurely strolls along lakeside paths, while more experienced hikers can take on the challenge of multi-day alpine treks.

Beginner

Mount Tenbozan (1,173 m) and Mount Hakuunzan (1,186 m) loop

Grade 2

This leisurely route starts at the southern shore of Lake Shikaribetsu (810 m), a pristine high-altitude lake in the Higashi-Taisetsu area. The trail is hemmed by groves of Yezo spruce, Erman's birch, and Sakhalin fir, with lush carpets of moss among the trees. Two small volcanoes, Mt. Tenbozan and Mt. Hakuunzan, flank the lake; Mt. Upepesanke (1,848 m) can be seen from their summits. The loop takes three to 4 hours. After the hike, take a soak at one of the hot springs by the lakeshore. There is a campground at the north end of the lake.

Kogen Onsen ponds

Grade 2

A loop trail from the Brown Bear Information Center weaves among 16 sub-alpine ponds on the northeastern side of the Daisetsuzan volcanic group. The area around Kogen Onsen is home to a large population of Ussuri brown bears, and a highlight of this hike is the possibility of seeing signs of bear activity—scratches on trees, paw prints along the way—or a bear itself. Be sure to follow the instructions given by trail staff if you see a bear. Entry to the trail is highly regulated to ensure the safety of hikers, with strict opening and closing hours. Visitors are required to attend a lecture on bear safety at the Center before embarking. The entire circuit through the marshes stretches 7 kilometers and takes about 5 hours to complete. Check the Brown Bear Information Center's website for details on trail opening hours.

Intermediate

Mt. Asahidake (2,291 m) to Mt. Kurodake (1,984 m)

Grade 2–4

The 13-kilometer traverse from Mt. Kurodake to Hokkaido's highest peak, Mt. Asahidake, is an intermediate-level hike suited for seasoned hikers. The trail winds through a range of alpine scenery, including meadows of delicate alpine flowers in bloom through July and August, steaming volcanic vents, and the 2-kilometer-wide Ohachidaira Caldera. It is possible to complete the hike in a day (about 8 hours), but many hikers choose to stay overnight at the Kurodake Ishimuro Hut or its adjacent campsite. The route can be traversed in either direction, and includes an ascent to either Mt. Hokkai (2,149 m) or Mt. Hokuchin (2,244 m), Hokkaido's second-highest peak. There are time-saving ropeways and relaxing hot-spring baths at each end of the traverse, perfect for recuperating after an exhilarating hike.

Mt. Tokachidake (2,077 m)

Grade 3–4

Mt. Tokachidake, an active volcano, is the highest peak in the Tokachi volcanic group. The hike to the summit offers views of the volcanic vents and craters on the mountain. Narrow ridgelines and gravel-covered slopes make it a challenge, but hikers are rewarded with panoramic views of surrounding peaks, including Mt. Bieidake (2,052 m) and Mt. Furanodake (1,912 m). A round trip from Tokachidake Onsen takes about 7 hours. Be sure to check the weather and volcanic alert level before setting out.

Advanced

Mt. Nipesotsu (2,013 m)

Grade 4

The climb to the jagged, spear-like summit of this isolated peak takes around 12 hours round trip, and requires a high level of fitness. After climbing through a dense forest and along rocky ridges, hikers can take in panoramic views of the Ishikari and Tokachi mountain ranges above the tree line. The trail begins at Horoka Onsen in Higashi-Taisetsu.

Daisetsuzan Grand Traverse

Grade 4–5

The Daisetsuzan Grand Traverse is a 6- to 8-day trek that covers more than 80 kilometers of trails. Dramatic volcanic landscapes, rugged knife-edge ridgelines, and flower-filled meadows in the summer months are among the views you will encounter

along the way. Because of the scarcity of water at the south end of the trail in summer, many hikers walk south to north. This route starts at Tokachidake Onsen and goes to Mt. Asahidake, finishing at Asahidake Onsen—or continues to the summit of Mt. Kurodake, ending at Sounkyo Onsen. This traverse involves staying at campsites and carrying your own supplies of food and water. Careful planning, experience, and a high level of fitness are required.