

Accommodations on Mt. Norikura

Sleeping at high altitude and waking to see the sun rise above a sea of clouds is an experience usually reserved for only the most intrepid hikers. Mt. Norikura, however, has unrivaled accessibility for a mountain of over 3,000 meters, and excellent accommodations are available within a short walk of the Norikura Bus Terminal at Tatamidaira. Everyone from casual tourists to seasoned alpinists can stay overnight in safety and comfort, then wake to begin a full day of mountain recreation.

There are three places to stay near the summit: Norikura Haku'unsō, Norikura Ginreisō, and Kata no Koya Mountain Hut. All of them are open for the summer season—roughly mid-June to mid-October—but close for the winter snows. Haku'unsō and Ginreisō are located at the Tatamidaira parking area and cater to both casual visitors and hikers looking for the comforts of a typical lodging. The two facilities even provide hot baths, which at this altitude was considered a luxury for many years. Water is precious here, and both establishments use collected rainwater, snowmelt, and water from the nearby Kiezu Pond.

Kata no Koya Mountain Hut is located a 30-minute walk south of the Tatamidaira parking area. Like many mountain huts in the region, Kata no Koya is designed to provide no-frills shelter and hearty meals to hikers completing multi-day hikes. The hut is closer than the other lodgings to Norikura's highest peak, Mt. Kengamine (3,026 m); it is also next to Daisekkei (Big Snow Valley), where permanent snow allows skiing and snowboarding even in mid-summer.

Each of Mt. Norikura's accommodations offers comfortable facilities and good meals, as well as a wealth of local wisdom and experience. Staff can provide advice on the weather, hiking trails, and how to spot mountain flora and fauna. They are also equipped to deal with minor medical emergencies and altitude sickness.

Lodging high on Mt. Norikura has a long history. Mountain ascetics (*yamabushi*) such as Enkū (1632–1695) and Mokujiki (1718–1810) visited Mt. Norikura on spiritual journeys, lodging in huts or rock shelters. Mokujiki is said to have dwelled in a small cave that is still visible near the top of Mt. Dainichi (3,014 m), Mt. Norikura's second-highest peak.