

Scenic Beauty for Future Generations

Grand ridges crowned with snow

A wooden walkway runs through colorful alpine plants

Gorge with colored leaves

Marsh with Japanese cranes dancing gracefully

Meadow with cattle grazing

Islands facing the setting sun on the open sea

Mystic ocean with tropical fish and coral reefs

The ecosystem a subtropical forest brings up

We can recuperate and be inspired when close to nature.

National parks have been established for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

What is National Parks of Japan?

National parks of Japan are landscape areas of national importance. They have been designated as "areas of the greatest natural scenic beauty," by the Minister of the Environment under the Natural Parks Law. The Law provides the legal basis for three types of natural parks: National Parks, Quasi-National Parks, and Prefectural Natural Parks. Currently 34 areas have been designated as National parks, 57 as Quasi-National Parks, and more than 300 as Prefectural Natural Parks. The 34 National Parks cover about 2.19 million ha, which is about 5.8 percent of the total land area of Japan. National Parks receive about three hundred million visitors annually.



Minami Alps National Park

History of National Parks

The national park concept was first developed in the United States. In 1872, Yellowstone was designated as the world first national park. The concept soon prevailed all over the world. Based on the American National Park System, Japan designated the first three National Parks in March 1934: Setonaikai, Unzen, and Kirishima. By 1936, there were 12 national parks. After World War II, more were designated, the most recent of which is Amamigunto National Park, designated in 2017 as the 34th in Japan.

Features of Japan's National Parks

Japan is a small, densely populated land, in which people use the land for agriculture, forestry, and other economic purposes as well as for outdoor recreation. To regulate use, Japan has adopted a zoning system, which allows the government to designate national parks regardless of land-ownership. At the same time, the designated areas are not necessarily used exclusively for park purposes, though some rights of land use are controlled, and some duties are imposed, according to the category of the park.



Amamigunto National Park