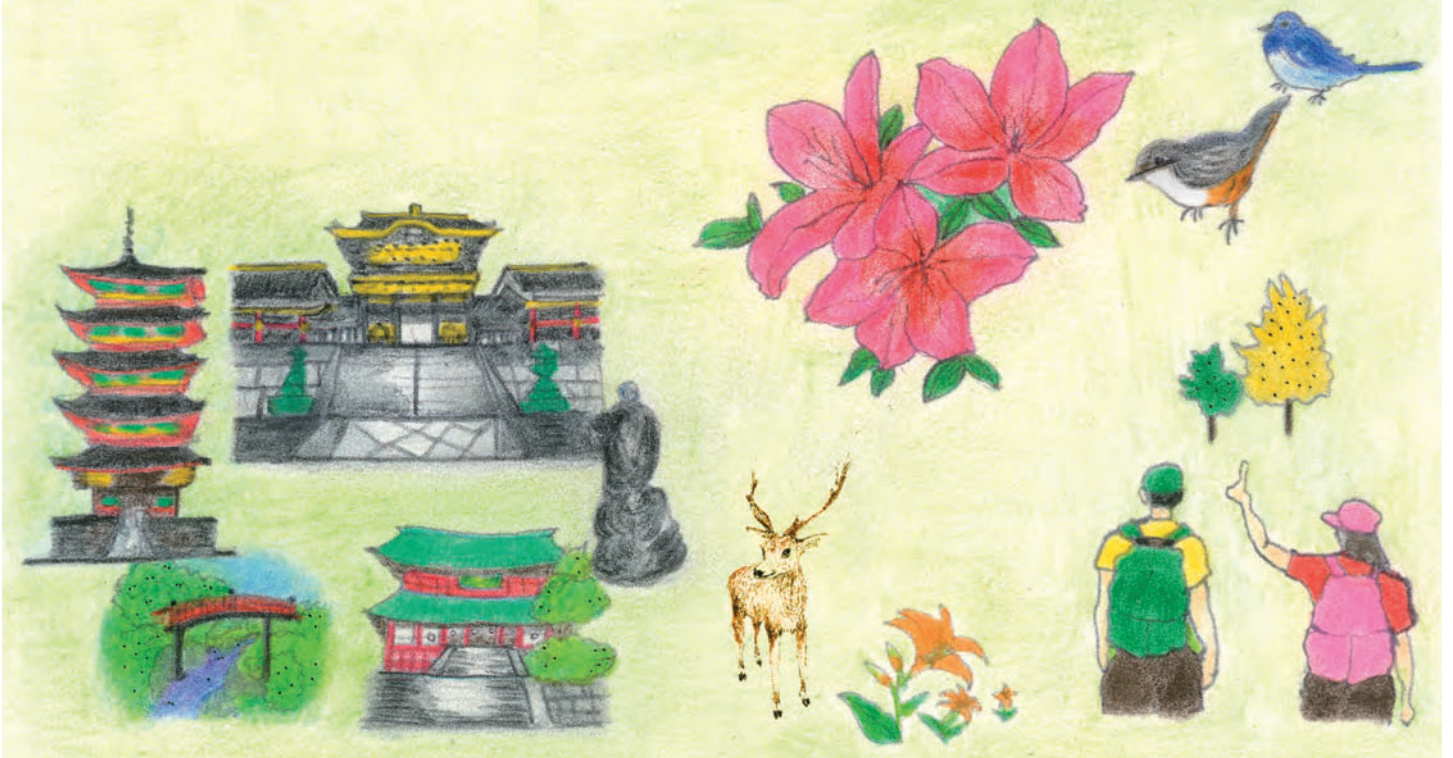


Okumade Nikko: Stories that Deepen Your Love for Nikko



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Why We Created This Book

The Nikko National Park area is an international destination that welcomes approximately 6 million tourists annually (2023 data) from within and outside Japan.

With so many visitors, it is vital to help them deepen their connection to Nikko by conveying "Nikko-ness" to them during their visit. By "Nikko-ness", we are referring to the unique charms, values, and background stories found in the natural scenery, culture, and history of Nikko. By sharing this "Nikko-ness", we can offer unforgettable, one-of-a-kind emotions and encourage longer stays and repeat visits. Just as a traveller to Europe seeks local wine and history, we would like to help guests understand the deep value of Nikko's nature and culture.

Conveying this "Nikko-ness" is known as 'Interpretation'. It is not just the job of guides and tour operators. All stakeholders in the local hospitality industry, including accommodations, restaurants, souvenir shops, visitor centres, and transport, have unique channels to interact with guests. Every one of us connected to Nikko is a vital medium for this communication.

This book was created as part of Nikko's overall "Interpretation Plan" and organises "Nikko-ness" into two elements: "Stories" and "Experiences". These two elements work hand-in-hand. For example, a fishing trip becomes truly special when the guest knows the story of how fly fishing first arrived in Japan at Yugawa River. Even if you do not conduct tours yourself, providing the right story to a visitor can transform their experience. Since guests have taken the trouble to visit, we invite you to share these stories with them. Sharing these stories together is what builds a stronger regional brand.

Our goal is not to just create this book. We want everyone to make use of it. We strongly encourage you to apply the information in this book when creating tours, developing guide programmes, planning products, or internal training. We want everyone to know the region's deep charm and the stories hidden within it.

Lastly, we hope this book leads to a future where people are inspired by the natural and cultural depths of Nikko and guests continue to visit over future generations.

"Okumade Nikko" Regional Secretariat Team

How to use this book

Message from the 'Okumade Nikko' Regional Secretariat

Imagine your own travels for a moment.

Do you know that feeling of joy when you discover unique local insights not found on the internet or in guidebooks? It makes you excited and want to share that discovery with others.

Our goal was to make these unique local insights about Nikko accessible. With the help of over 200 Nikko enthusiasts, we compiled their knowledge into this one book.

We invite you to freely use this book for staff training, tourism PR, and the development of new products or services. We want all stakeholders, regardless of industry or district, to be able to confidently introduce 'Nikko-ness' (Nikko's unique local value) so visitors can experience it to the fullest.

By sharing these insights, together we can create new Nikko fans, encourage repeat visits, and build a bright future for the area.

Practical Ways to Use this Book

■ **Leisure & Tour Guides**

Incorporate the 'Story List' (p.5-29) and '16 Experiences' (p.33-50) into your tour programmes.

■ **Media & Information (Pamphlets & Websites)**

Integrate the themes from the 'Story List' (p.5-29) into your designs and create special features based on the '16 Experiences' (p.33-50).

■ **Accommodation, F&B & Transport**

Use this book as a textbook for staff training and offer the '16 Experiences' (p.33-50) as personal recommendations based on your own experience.

■ **Souvenir Providers**

Apply the 'Story List' (p.5-29) and '16 Experiences' (p.33-50) to your product development and package design.

The Stories that Deepen Your Love for Nikko

Through workshops and discussions, we compiled many stories that share the invisible values, local insights, and unique charms of the Nikko area found nowhere else.

We organised these stories into three major stories and 22 sub-stories to bring these unique qualities to life. The three major stories begin with "People and History", then move to "Geography and Nature", and finally to "Seasons and Scenery". This flow takes you from the familiar history of Nikko deeper into the magnificence of nature and seasonal changes.

We hope you enjoy reading and learning about the depth of this narrative, experiencing it as a journey from the entrance of Nikko deep into its interior, Okunikko.

Story Title ① People and History : Lives shaped alongside nature

Substory Title

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 - 1 Shugendo and Mountain asceticism | 1 - 6 Festivals and Traditions that Weave Nikko's Appeal |
| 1 - 2 History and Culture in Harmony with Nature | 1 - 7 The People Who Make Nikko Special |
| 1 - 3 Cultural Growth and Connection through Transport | 1 - 8 The Story of Nikko's Fishing Culture |
| 1 - 4 Places to Stay and Visit Shaped by Faith and International Influences | 1 - 9 Memories of Nikko that Connect Generations |
| 1 - 5 Hot Springs and a Culture of Healing | 1 - 10 Savoring Local Culture Through Food |

Story Title ② Geography and Nature : The land and ecosystems shaped by volcanoes

Substory Title

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 - 1 Landscapes Woven by Volcanoes and Water | 2 - 5 A Variety of Activities Formed by the Natural Environment |
| 2 - 2 Waterfalls and Clear Streams as Natural Art | 2 - 6 Encounters with Diverse Wildlife |
| 2 - 3 The Story of Marshlands and Grasslands | 2 - 7 Exploring Ideas in Nikko for a Future Coexisting with Nature |
| 2 - 4 Varied Scenery Shaped by Geology and Landforms | 2 - 8 Unwind to Nature's Rhythm Beneath Starry Skies |

Story Title ③ Seasons and Scenery: The magnificent views of Nikko, painted by the four seasons

Substory Title

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 - 1 Spring: When Flowers Colour the Mountainsides | 3 - 3 Autumn: A tapestry of Autumn Leaves Shaped by Elevation Changes |
| 3 - 2 Summer: Feeling the Coolness of Nature | 3 - 4 Winter: Making the Most of Ice and Snow |

01

Story

People and History

Lives shaped alongside nature

A Story of Faith and Daily Life in Harmony with Nature

Nikko is a special place with more than 1,200 years of history as a sacred ground of Mountain asceticism founded by Shōdō Shōnin in the late Nara period (710–794). The paths he opened later expanded as a place of faith, giving rise to the two shrines and one temple of Nikko in harmony with nature, ancient paths, and distinctive food culture and crafts that highlight the region's appeal. On the Senjogahara Marshland, legends tell of battles among deities. When the deified spirit of Tokugawa Ieyasu was enshrined at Nikko Toshogu Shrine, people began visiting from all over Japan. After Nikko Toshogu Shrine was built, modern Nikko developed into an international tourism destination, and the festivals and traditional events help pass on its rich history. Filled with a sacred atmosphere, the area has many places known as power spots and continues to attract visitors.

* “The two shrines and one temple of Nikko” refers to Nikko Toshogu Shrine, Nikko Futarasan-Jinja Shrine, and Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple. Together they are registered as the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Shrines and Temples of Nikko”



Waymarker of Shugendō: Kongō Dōji Statue

Nikko's mountain range took shape through volcanic activity more than 20,000 years ago, creating a dramatic landscape and rich nature. In the late Nara period (710-794), the eminent monk Shōdō Shōnin challenged these steep peaks and opened this sacred ground. His routes live on as today's mountain trails, and hikers unknowingly follow in the footsteps of ancient ascetics. In the past, Okunikko was off limits to women, but today the area is open, and anyone can encounter its nature and the history of faith. The mountains of Nikko preserve a unique scenery where nature and belief are intertwined.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Mt. Nantai Tohaisai festival

- Mt. Nantai is itself an object of worship, and the summit stands the Okumiya (inner shrine) of Nikko Futarasan-jinja Shrine.
- Each summer, a night ascent is held during the Tohaisai festival, and many worshippers greet the sunrise at the summit. This practice has continued for over 1,200 years and has been passed down as living prayers offered to majestic nature.

※ Mt. Nantai has a designated climbing season. The mountain is open to climbers each year from 25th April to 11th November.



Night ascent during the Tohaisai festival

Chuzen-ji Temple Tachiki Kannon

- After conquering Mt. Nantai's summit, Shōdō Shōnin founded Chuzen-ji Temple on the lakeshore. During a boat pilgrimage along the shore, a shining image of Senju Kannon (a Thousand-armed Kannon) appeared on the lake, and he carved the Thousand-Armed Kannon into a standing katsura tree within the precincts. Tachiki Kannon Statue is the temple's principal image.



Tachiki Kannon Statue

- Funazenjō is a ritual that retraces the sacred sites the Shōnin once visited, and the general public may join with advance reservation.



Funazenjō (boat ritual)

Nyonindō (Women's Hall)

- A place of worship at the foot of the First Iroha Slope. In times when Okunikko was closed to women, those who could not enter the mountains worshipped Mt. Nantai from here. It is a remote worship site established for venerating deities and buddhas from afar.



Nyonindō with blooming katakuri



Mt. Nantai Tohaisai festival

The historic buildings of Nikko, including Nikko Toshogu Shrine, Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple, and Nikko Futarasan-jinja Shrine (the two shrines and one temple), form a distinctive cultural landscape together with the nature and history of faith in the Nikko mountain range.

As a site of Mountain asceticism for over 1,200 years, this area embodies a living story where deities dwell and nature and prayer are intertwined. After Nikko Toshogu Shrine was established, the sacred area also took on the role of a pilgrimage destination, creating a unique appeal where tradition meets newer culture.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Nikko Toshogu Shrine

- Built in the Edo period to enshrine the spirit of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first shogun.
- As one of the two shrines and one temple, it is designated as the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Shrines and Temples of Nikko.”



Nikko Toshogu Shrine Yomeimon Gate

Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple

- Established by Shōdō Shōnin, this temple flourished as a center of Mountain asceticism.
- The grounds, long visited by many ascetics, include Sanbutsudō, which enshrines three Buddhist statues representing the three sacred mountains of Nikko. Numerous sites on the grounds pass on the history of Shugendō to the present day.



Sanbutsudō (Nikko-zan Rinno-ji)

Nikko Futarasan-jinja Shrine

- This shrine marks the beginning of faith on this Nikko mountain range, opened more than 1,200 years ago.
- Enshrines Mt. Nantai as its sacred body, gathering people’s reverence for Nikko’s nature since ancient times.



Nikko Futarasan-Jinja Main Shrine

The routes to Nikko grew alongside its history as a sacred ground for Shugendō. Taking shape after the founding of Nikko more than 1,200 years ago, these roads became vital paths welcoming pilgrims from across Japan. In modern times, railways, trams, and cable cars expanded access, bringing more visitors. Today's national and main roads provide convenient access for day trips from Tokyo, drawing many travelers. Roads such as the Iroha Slope are popular among drivers, motorcyclists, and cyclists,



Bus on the old Iroha Slope route



Former Nikko Tram Line

and they also link onward to Oze. These routes have continued to play a significant role in attracting people to Nikko over the centuries.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Iroha Slope and Nikko

- Historically, this was a sacred route linking holy sites, and entry by women, cattle, and horses was prohibited. As Nikko developed into an international tourism destination, the roads were improved, and sightseeing routes were established to welcome many visitors.
- A tram once ran from Nikko Station to the base at Umagaeshi. Today, you can see the old tram car in front of Tobu Nikko Station.



An old tram car used on the former Nikko Tram Line



Second Iroha Slope for car traffic

Walking the Nikko Cedar Road

- Known as the world's longest road lined with trees, planted in the Edo period (1603-1868) as a pilgrimage approach to Nikko Toshogu Shrine.
- Many historic sites can be found nearby, allowing visitors to sense Nikko's history as a significant pilgrimage destination in the Edo period.



Nikko Cedar Road, past and present



Former lakeside inn on Lake Chuzenji

Accommodation in Nikko reflects both its sacred history and its growth as an international resort. Rooted in the era of Mountain asceticism, Nikko flourished as a place of faith, and with modern development became a renowned international destination. The historic inns around the two shrines and one temple, lodgings along Lake Chuzenji, and former embassy villas symbolize this history, offering a refined time in harmony with nature. Today at the British Embassy Villa Memorial Park, you can enjoy an English-style afternoon tea as you gaze out over the lake and take in the area's summer-resort heritage.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Touring the Historic Sites of Hatsuishi Town

Hatsuishi Town, around the two shrines and one temple, has long welcomed many travelers. Here you can visit many historic sites that show how Nikko grew into an international destination, including Nikko Kanaya Hotel, Japan's oldest existing resort hotel.



Nikko Kanaya Hotel

Tracing Former Villa Sites along Lake Chuzenji

International Summer - Resort Memorial Area

Today, the former British and Italian Embassy villas are preserved as memorial parks, where you can explore each country's culture and the history of this international summer resort.



Mantelpiece remaining at Nishirokuban Garden



Italian Embassy Villa Memorial Park

Nishirokuban Garden

Built as the villa of Meiji-era (1868–1912) trader Thomas Glover. It later became the headquarters of the Tokyo Angling and Country Club. Although the villa itself no longer stands, the surviving mantelpiece captures the atmosphere of the era's international social scene.

Hot Springs and a Culture of Healing



The source of Nikko Yumoto Onsen

Nikko's hot springs are a source of healing shaped by the unique volcanic landforms and abundant waters. The milky sulfur springs of historic Yumoto Onsen, dating back to the Nara period (710-794), have long attracted people. Hot spring water is piped to the Chuzenji area through a long-standing pipeline more than 10 kilometers long, and visitors can even bathe at the Onsen-ji Temple. Together, these features show that Nikko's hot spring culture is rich in diverse appeal. In winter, the scent of sulfur from Yumoto Onsen and the beautiful surface of snow-covered Lake Yunoko welcome visitors. In Nikko, soaking in hot springs while viewing spring flowers, fresh spring greenery, autumn leaves, or snowy landscapes is deeply relaxing.

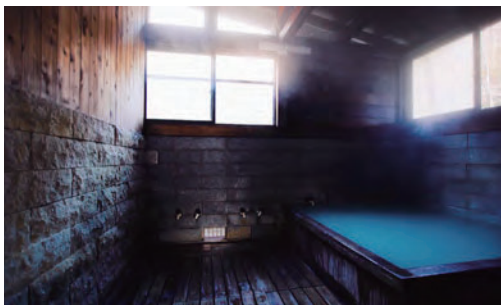
Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Bathing in the sulfur springs of Nikko Yumoto Onsen

- Located on the north shore of Lake Yunoko, Yumoto Onsen has a 1,200-year history and is known for one of Japan's richest sulfur springs. Visitors can bathe while surrounded by nature, enjoying every season.



Sulfur springs of Nikko Yumoto Onsen



The Bath in the temple

Nikko-zan Onsen-ji Temple

- Founded when Shōdo Shōnin discovered the hot spring and enshrined Yakushi Nyorai for healing. It is one of the rare temples in Japan where visitors can bathe during a pilgrimage.



The temple's external appearance



The approach to the temple

Seasonal festivals and events play an essential role in passing local history and tradition to future generations. During Yayoi-sai, colourful hana-yatai (festival floats with artificial flowers) parade and bring the community together. On summer nights, dancers move to the rhythms of the traditional Nikko Waraku Odori, captivating onlookers. The Hyakumonzoroi Sennin Musha Gyoretsu recreates a grand procession like a historical picture scroll, set against the backdrop of Nikko Toshogu Shrine. These festivals are significant events that blend local nature and culture, bringing the region's history and traditions to life, and often leaving visitors deeply moved. These festivals also spread Nikko's appeal widely and offer special experiences where nature and culture are in harmony.



Meishi Koukan (Exchange Business Card) at Yayoi-sai



Hana-yatai entering the precincts

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story



Hana-yatai lit with lanterns

Yayoi-sai festival (held annually from 13th to 17th April)

- A splendid 1,200-year-old spring festival where hana-yatai decorated with artificial yashitsutsuji flowers parade to welcome the arrival of spring.

Hyakumonzoroi Sennin Musha Gyoretsu

(held annually on 18th May and 17th October)

- A festival that recreates the procession when the enshrined spirit of Tokugawa Ieyasu was transferred from Kunozan in Shizuoka to Nikko.
- Held twice a year in the spring and autumn. A grand procession proceeds along the approach of the shrine.



Hyakumonzoroi Sennin Musha Gyoretsu (Thousand warrior procession)



Dancing around Waraku Pond

Nikko Waraku Odori

(held annually on the first Friday of August)

- This festival began in the Taisho period (1912-1926) as an employee appreciation event at Nikko Electric Refining Works (now Furukawa Electric).
- Its lively songs and dances have been passed down for over a century and continue to bring the community together.

The People Who Make Nikko Special



Taisuke Itagaki
(The statesman
who saved the
shrines and
temples)

The charm of Nikko is shaped by both famous historical figures and the local people who have supported the area through their everyday lives. Key figures such as Shōdō Shōnin, Tenkai, Taisuke Itagaki, and Ernest Satow have left deep marks on Nikko's history and culture. However, equally important are the people living in Nikko today who protect traditions, keep festivals alive, and warmly welcome visitors. It is the collective effort of every individual that builds the Nikko of today and lays the foundation for its future appeal.



Tenkai
(The high priest who built Nikko Toshogu Shrine)

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Nikko's history is told not just through buildings, but through the figures who shaped it and the traditions that sustain it.

Statues

- Near Shinkyo Bridge stand statues of Tenkai, the advisor who supported the creation of Nikko Toshogu Shrine, and Taisuke Itagaki, who protected Nikko from the fires of war. In front of the Sanbutsudo Hall of Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple stands Shōdō Shōnin, the founder of Nikko, while the master carpenter Munehiro Koura oversees the Toshogu Shrine parking lot. By walking among these sites, you can trace the history of Nikko's founding, construction, and preservation through the faces of those who made it happen.



Kuriishi-gaeshi (Stone cleaning ritual)



Kuriishi-gaeshi

- At Nikko Toshogu Shrine and Taiyuin, a ritual known as "Kuriishi-gaeshi" (turning over stones) takes place. This involves manually moving the pebble stones lining the grounds one by one to clean out cedar leaves and debris. Many local residents participate in this activity, maintaining a deep connection between the community and the history of their faith.



Fly-fishing on Yugawa River

Beginning in the Meiji era (1868–1912), embassy villas were built along the shores of Lake Chuzenji, and its cool climate and beautiful scenery helped the area grow into an international summer resort that attracted foreign visitors. Westerners introduced fish not previously found in Lake Yunoko or Lake Chuzenji, and the Yugawa River became known as the birthplace of fly-fishing in Japan, forming a unique culture. Over time, Okunikko became a special place where nature and culture intersect, offering visitors a calm, unhurried time to this day.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Enjoying Fly-Fishing on the Yugawa River

- At the Yugawa River, the birthplace of fly-fishing in Japan, you can enjoy fly-fishing surrounded by the vast nature of Senjogahara Marshland.
- The open season runs from May to September, when you can spot trout species such as brook trout, which are rarely seen outside Nikko.



Yudaki Falls and an angler



Himemasu salmon (Kokanee) swimming upstream

Himemasu salmon (Kokanee) swimming in Lake Chuzenji

- The Himemasu salmon was introduced to Lake Chuzenji in the Meiji era and has adapted to the environment of Okunikko.
- Each autumn, they turn a reddish colour and swim up the Yugawa River in groups to spawn. People even say, “At Lake Chuzenji, autumn colours begin under the water.”
- Prized for their flavor, they have been widely caught and have shaped local food culture.



The Approach within the World Heritage area

Nikko is widely known across Japan as a special destination for school trips for elementary and junior high students. For many, it is their first real experience of nature and history. Later, many return with their families and share those experiences across generations. This culture of returning after school trips is rare and is one of Nikko's distinctive appeals. Many memories meet new discoveries and deepen bonds across generations.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

World Heritage within Easy Reach of Tokyo

- The Shrines and Temples of Nikko are registered as a World Cultural Heritage Site for their harmony with nature and for architectural techniques that influenced later styles.
- Closely tied to the Edo shogunate, which laid the foundations of Tokyo, the site offers rich learning about familiar history and cultural properties, drawing many school trips, especially from the Tokyo area.



Students on a school trip visiting Nikko Futarasan-jinja Shrine



Students hiking in Senjogahara Marshland

Nature Walk in the Senjogahara Marshland

- Okunikko's volcanic landforms allow children to learn a variety of science topics, such as "Earth's structure and changes", through hands-on activities.
- Senjogahara Marshland has well-maintained walking trails, so even primary school students can walk safely and learn about the natural environment easily.



Nikko's Yuba

Nikko's food culture is a special blend of the rich nature and time-honored techniques. Dishes featuring Yuba (tofu skin) and mountain vegetables have been handed down with the history of mountain asceticism and carried on today in new forms. Sake brewed with Nikko's pure water and traditional Yokan sweets adds to the pleasures of travel. Local flavors such as Himemasu salmon (Kokanee) from Lake Chuzenji, shaved ice made with natural ice, Nikko HIMITSU pork, Kirifuri highland beef, Yashio trout, and Sansho pepper are also favorites among visitors. The area around Nikko Station, where you can snack and stroll, also plays a part in the food culture.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Enjoy Food Culture Rooted in Mountain Asceticism

- Yuba (tofu skin), a speciality of Nikko, was originally an important source of protein for practitioners who abstained from meat.
- Salted shiso-wrapped chili peppers were eaten by practitioners during mountain training to warm the body and replenish salt.



Ascetic practitioners



Soy-flavored sautéed trout

Taste Trout Sauté at Lakeside Eateries

- As Nikko, especially around Lake Chuzenji, grew as a resort for foreigners in the Meiji era (1868–1912), Western cuisine also flourished.
- Trout sauté, created to suit Western tastes while using Japanese ingredients and seasonings, is a signature dish that passes on the local culture of Nikko.

02

Story

Geography and Nature

The land and ecosystems shaped by volcanoes

Rich nature sustained by diverse landforms born of volcanic activity

Nikko's terrain forms a vast natural stage shaped by the volcanic Nikko mountain range, Lake Chuzenji, and the Senjogahara Marshland. Springs and clear streams support rich ecosystems, and the changing scenery through the seasons draws visitors in. At the centre of these views stands Mt. Nantai, regarded as the father of the Nikko mountains. The landforms have also influenced local culture and everyday life, passing on a story of balance between people and nature. Icefalls, autumn colours, and other striking features symbolise Nikko's mysterious appeal.



Lake Chuzenji and Mt. Nantai from Mt. Hangetsu

Nikko's lakes, marshlands, and waterfalls were shaped by long-lasting volcanic activity. At the foot of Mt. Nantai lies Lake Chuzenji, one of Japan's highest-elevation large natural lakes. From it plunges the powerful Kegon Falls, while the vast Senjogahara Marshland spreads out at an even higher altitude. The scenery created by this abundance of water is a major draw for travellers. Elevation differences produce varied views that shift with season, time, and viewing angle, especially Mt. Nantai, keeping visitors engaged. These distinctive landforms underpin ecosystems, culture, and daily life, and they pass on Nikko's grand natural story to today.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Viewpoints overlooking landscapes shaped by volcanoes and water

- From Akechidaira Viewpoint, you can see Mt. Nantai, Lake Chuzenji at its foot, and Kegon Falls in one sweep, revealing the complex landscapes of Okunikko.
- From the Mt. Hangetsu Viewpoint, you can look over Mt. Nantai, Lake Chuzenji, and beyond to Senjogahara.



Kegon Falls and Lake Chuzenji from Akechidaira

Iroha Slope, a route to enjoy changing scenery by elevation

- From Umagaeshi to Akechidaira, Iroha Slope climbs about 440 metres. You can feel the gradation of autumn colours and other landscape changes created by Nikko's elevation range.



Autumn colours on the Second Iroha Slope

Mt. Nantai, Mt. Shirane, and Mt. Sukai, chosen as three of Japan's 100 Famous Mountains

- From the Nikko area, Mt. Nantai, Mt. Shirane, and Mt. Sukai are among Hyakumeizan (Japan's 100 Famous Mountains) selected by mountaineer-novelist Fukuda Kyuya based on peaks he climbed himself.



Mt. Nantai and Lake Chuzenji seen from the summit of Mt. Shirane



Ryuzu Falls with Eastern azalea in bloom

Nikko's waterfalls and rivers are natural art formed by steep volcanic terrain and abundant springs. Water stored in the mountains emerges and flows across a stepped landscape, moving through Lake Yunoko, Senjogahara Marshland, and Lake Chuzenji. Linking these steps are three famous falls, dynamic Yudaki Falls, graceful Ryuzu Falls, and solemn Kegon Falls. There are many more, including Kirifuri Falls and Urami Falls. Many of the forty-eight falls have names rooted in faith. Waterfalls and clear streams are symbols of Nikko's harmony with nature and religion.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

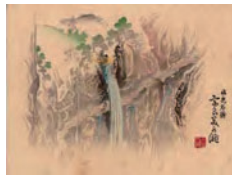
Nikko's famous, dynamic, and beautiful Waterfalls

Kegon Falls

- A 97 m drop from Lake Chuzenji. Together with the twelve subsidiary flows fed by groundwater from the surrounding rock, it creates an impressive scene.

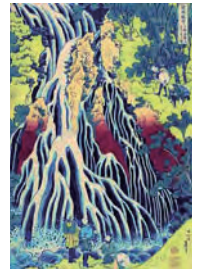
Urami Falls

- Once known as a site of Shugendō practice. From the Edo period (1603–1868) many visited, including Matsuo Basho (1644–1694), the most influential haiku poet in Japan. Fudō Myōō (a wrathful deity in Japanese Buddhism who serves as a fierce protector of the law) is enshrined behind the falls, and the harmony of nature and faith is passed on today.



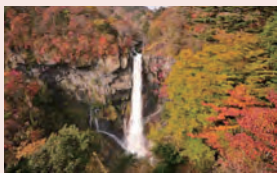
Kirifuri Falls

- Featured in a ukiyo-e print by Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849), a famous Japanese ukiyo-e artist of the Edo period. Water strikes the rock and scatters like falling mist, showing both power and elegance.



Collection of the Sumida Hokusai Museum

Nikko's Five Famous Falls



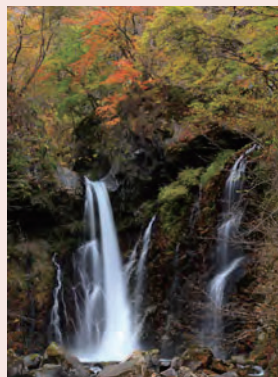
Kegon Falls



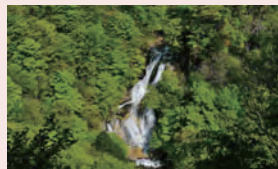
Ryuzu Falls



Yudaki Falls



Urami Falls



Kirifuri Falls

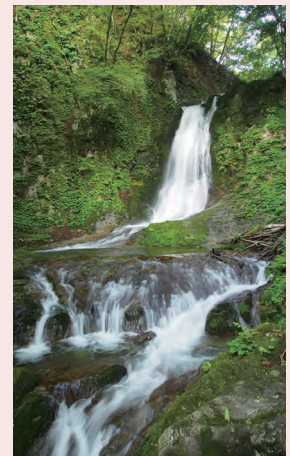
Kirifuri's Hidden Three Falls



Makkura Falls



Tamasudare Falls



Chōji Falls

The Story of Marshlands and Grasslands



Senjogahara marshland from the air

In cool, high-elevation Okunikko, expansive marshlands and grasslands spread out, including Senjogahara Marshland and Odashirogahara marshland. Formed by a distinctive volcanic landscape, they provide habitat for diverse vegetation and birdlife. Registered in 2005 under the Ramsar Convention as the marshlands of Okunikko, these areas concentrate marsh, grassland, rivers, and forest in a compact area that changes with each season. Early mornings and evenings bring unexpected natural shifts and captivating gradations of colour. The ease of walking short routes to enjoy the marshland and grassland is also a unique appeal of Okunikko.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story



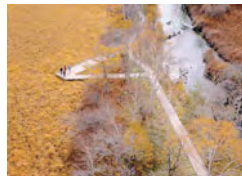
Hiking in Senjogahara Marshland

Walk the boardwalks of Senjogahara Marshland

- An eruption of Mt. Nantai dammed a river and formed a lake. Later, pumice deposits and plant peat built up, creating today's marshland.
- Well-maintained paths make it easy to enjoy the marshland scenery.



Early summer on Senjogahara marshland



Morning frost and autumn colour on Senjogahara Marshland



Winter scenery

Observe plant life at Odashirogahara Marshland

- Odashirogahara Marshland is an ecological middle ground between marshland and grassland, showing features of both, and you can observe unique vegetation and scenery.
- Flowers such as iris, Japanese thistle, and willowleaf meadowsweet bloom here. A symbolic white birch called the "Kifujin" (Lady of Odashirogahara) stands in the field.



Odashirogahara Marshland, where Japanese thistles bloom



Willowleaf meadowsweet



The autumn-coloured grasses of Odashirogahara Marshland



Early Spring and Winter at Odashirogahara Marshland



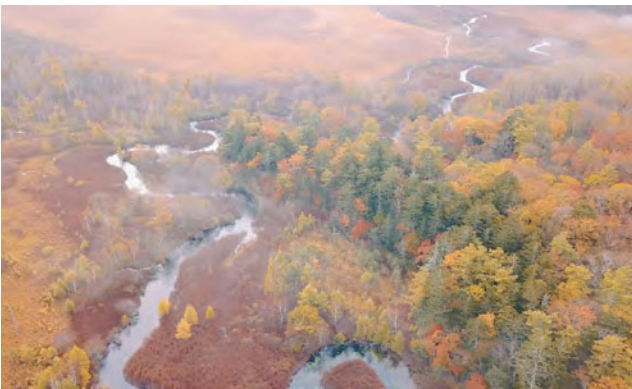
Varied Scenery Shaped by Geology and Landforms



Okunikko from the summit of Mt. Nikko-Shirane

Nikko sits at the climate boundary between the Sea of Japan side (west side of Japan) and the Pacific Ocean side (east side of Japan), and together with geology shaped by volcanic activity, this produces varied scenery. Around Senjogahara Marshland, the boundary allows plants from both climate zones to grow. As you descend Iroha Slope, the significant drop in elevation becomes clear. Abundant water and terrain support a wide variety of vegetation, creating habitats of high research value. Nikko's landforms could be called a miraculous stage created by nature.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

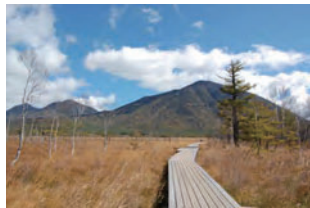


Diverse vegetation in Senjogahara Marshland

- Senjogahara Marshland sits on the boundary between the east and west climate zones, so you can observe plants from both.



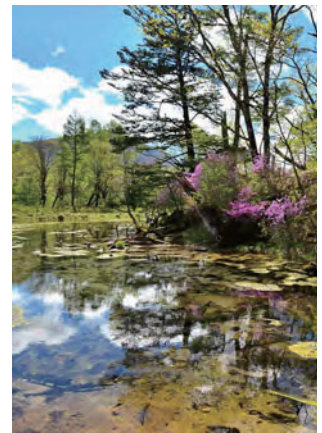
Summer scene



Grass turning colour

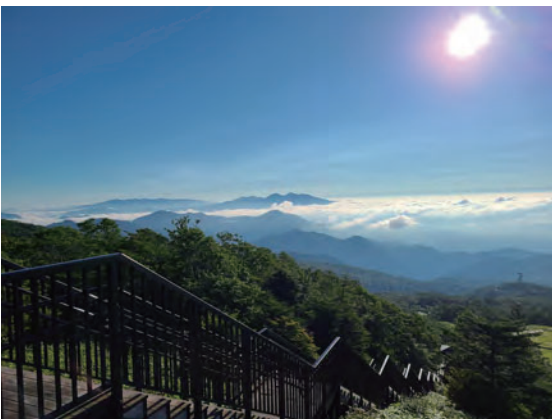


Geranium yesoense var. nipponicum



Izumiyadoike Pond

Sea of clouds and vegetation at Kirifuri Highland and Kisuge-daira



Morning at Kirifuri Highland

- At Kirifuri Highland, above 1,000 m with views over the Kanto Plain, moist air forms frequent seas of cloud.



Nikko daylilies in bloom at Kirifuri Highland

- Kirifuri Highland supports alpine plants such as Nikko daylilies, and grassland vegetation maintained by human care.

At Kirifuri Highland, you can see mountain plants such as Nikko daylilies (Nikko Kisuge) and managed vegetation.

A Variety of Activities Formed by the Natural Environment



Guided tour in Senjogahara Marshland

In Nikko, you can be close to nature in every season. Hiking, stand-up paddleboarding (SUP), kayaking, trekking, and snowshoeing each offer a special time you can enjoy only in spring, summer, autumn, or winter. These activities in the four seasons let you play fully with nature, relax and have fun, feel at one with the landscape, providing visitors with exciting adventures.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Hiking in Senjogahara Marshland

- Okunikko has many hiking and trekking routes, including around Senjogahara Marshland and Lake Yunoko. From May to June, cotton grass, Japanese azaleas, and Japanese crabapple bloom in the fresh greenery.



Hiking Senjogahara Marshland with Japanese crabapple in bloom

SUP and kayaking on Lake Chuzenji

- Lake Chuzenji is calm and clear, suitable for paddle sports such as stand-up paddleboarding (SUP). Enjoy time on the water with sweeping views of Mt. Nantai.



Enjoying SUP on Lake Chuzenji

Snowshoeing near Yumoto Onsen

- In winter, many routes open in Okunikko for snowshoe walks and snowy landscapes.



Dedicated snowshoe course in Yumoto Onsen

Encounters with Diverse Wildlife



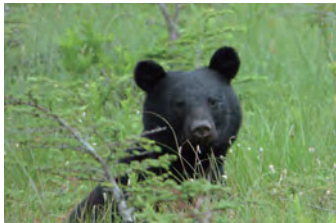
Japanese deer



Japanese macaque



Japanese serow



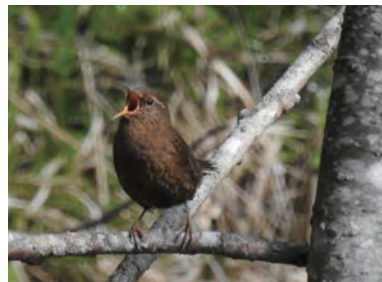
Asian black bear

Nikko is a treasure house where you can encounter wildlife at close range. More than 40 mammal species, such as bears, deer, monkeys, and Japanese serows, live here, and over 190 bird species, including blue-and-white flycatchers, narcissus flycatchers, and Japanese snipes. Insects and amphibians add to a rich ecosystem. A place where many species live near people symbolises biodiversity.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Birdwatching in Senjogahara Marshland

With marshland, rivers, and forest in one area, Senjogahara Marshland is known for its birdlife. The flat open views and many paths make it ideal for watching birds.



Eurasian wren



Siberian Stonechat

Animal tracking on snow

In Okunikko, where winter brings heavy snowfall and wild animals such as deer and monkeys are common, you can enjoy animal tracking by following footprints and other signs in the snow.



Animal footprints left on the snow



Japanese macaque eating tree bark

Okunikko Night Safari

By joining the Okunikko Night Safari operated by the Nikko Natural Science Museum, you can observe nocturnal wildlife from a low-emission bus.



Searching for Japanese deer from the bus at night

Exploring Ideas in Nikko for a Future Coexisting with Nature



Japanese deer eating Nikko fir bark

Nikko is also a special place to learn the importance of living with nature. Volcanic landforms have created diverse ecosystems and close encounters with wildlife help visitors feel both nature's appeal and its importance. At the same time, challenges such as damage of wildlife from increasing Japanese deer population and issues with invasive species exist. Through school trips and guided tours, learning about nature leads to awareness and action that protect the future environment.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Deer-proof fencing in Senjogahara Marshland

- Because the increasing Japanese deer population is damaging wetland plants in Senjogahara Marshland, fences have been installed to keep them out.
- Beyond a simple nature walk, seeing the fences and current situation encourages deeper learning about coexistence with wildlife and protecting rare environments.



Deer-proof gate and fencing

Nikko Yumoto Visitor Center

- Learn about Okunikko's natural environment and the Nikko region, which was shaped by a deep relationship between people and nature.



Exhibits explaining Okunikko's history and nature

Unwind to Nature's Rhythm Beneath Starry Skies



Starry sky over Senjogahara Marshland

Nikko's great outdoors is a special place to refresh mind and body, away from daily life. The star-filled sky seen from the open plains of Senjogahara Marshland, where elevation is high and lights are few, brings quiet and wonder. Time spent slowly by lakes and marshlands, letting your pace match nature's rhythm, becomes a luxurious escape. Unwinding under starry skies and in nature is one of Nikko's unique appeals.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Sanbonmatsu Garden

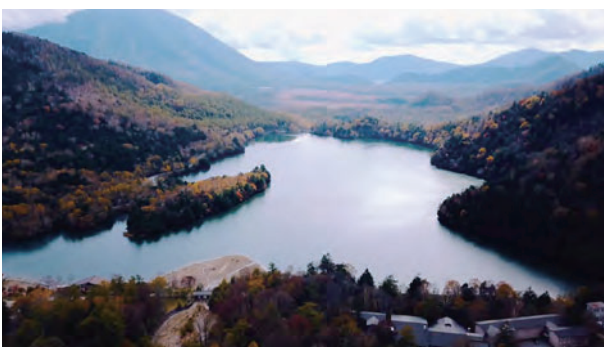
- On the high, open plain of Senjogahara Marshland, you can enjoy starry skies free from artificial light.



Late autumn at Sanbonmatsu Garden

Lake Yunoko

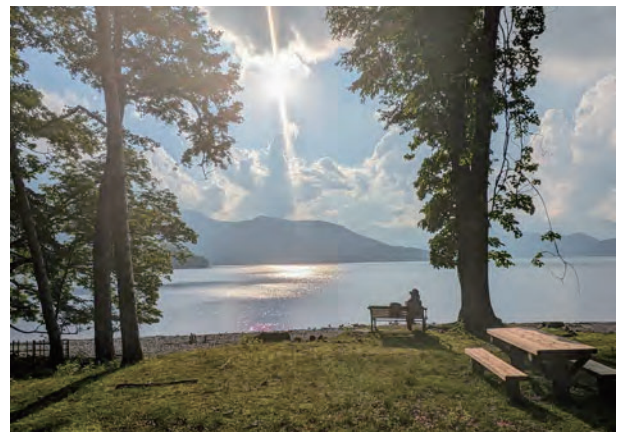
- With few structures around, you can enjoy the stars reflected on the water on calm, windless nights.



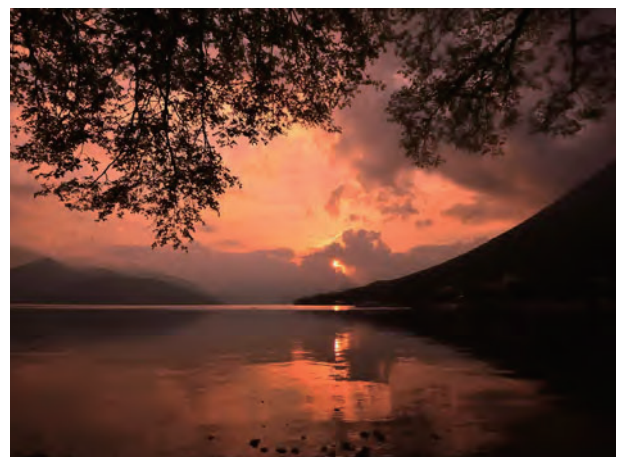
Aerial view of Lake Yunoko

See sunrise and sunset from the shore of Lake Chuzenji

- At wide-open Lake Chuzenji, you can enjoy not only a sky full of stars, but also magical scenes when the sun rises or sets over the lake



Evening view from the Italian Embassy Villa Memorial Park



Sunset over Lake Chuzenji

03

Story

Seasons and Scenery

The magnificent views of Nikko,
painted by the four seasons

Nikko's Ever-Changing Seasonal Beauty

Nikko is a beautiful place to visit year-round. You can fully enjoy the beauty of spring flowers and fresh greenery, the cool breezes of summer, the autumn leaves, and the winter snowscapes. The area's unique landscapes, such as the long autumn colour season due to the varied elevations and the frozen waterfalls of winter, offer new discoveries with every visit. The four seasons also influence the local festivals and culture, providing an experience unique to Nikko, where nature and history meet.



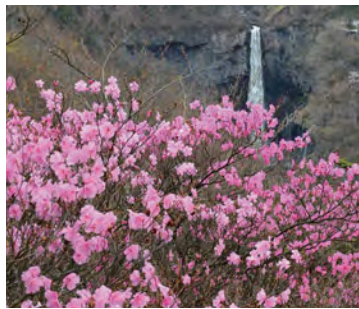
Sargent's cherry at Senjugahama Beach

In spring, Nikko's landscape comes to life with the colours of flowers like the Akayashio azaleas and Shiroyashio azaleas. In early summer, Japanese crabapple and Nikko daylilies adorn the marshlands and mountainsides, while the rare Willowleaf meadowsweet and Japanese wood poppy symbolize the area's unique ecosystem. The season's scenery is also defined by its cultural traditions. A key part of this is the Yayoi Festival, a vibrant, traditional event that marks the arrival of spring in Nikko, passing on the region's history and culture.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Akayashio azaleas and Shiroyashio azaleas at the Lake Chuzenji

- In spring, during the season of fresh green leaves, various types of azaleas such as Akayashio azaleas, Shiroyashio azaleas, and Togoku-mitsuba-tsutsuji bloom, colouring the mountains in many shades. They can be seen in various places in Nikko, including around the Lake Chuzenji.



Akayashio azaleas and Kegon Falls



Flower of the Shiroyashio azalea



Willowleaf meadowsweet



Senjogahara Marshland with Cotton grass plumes

Willowleaf meadowsweet at Senjogahara Marshland

- Willowleaf meadowsweet prefers cool, damp environments and has formed large colonies in Senjogahara Marshland, as it is an ideal habitat.
- Alongside the wooden footpaths, you can see a variety of colourful flowers representative of the marshland, including Cotton grass, Hakusan-furo, and Iris.

Japanese wood poppy on Mt. Shirane

- Named in Japanese after Mt. Shirane, the Japanese wood poppy (Japanese name: Shirane Aoi) is an alpine plant native to Japan and produces beautiful pale purple flowers.
- The Japanese wood poppy is designated as an endangered species on Tochigi Prefecture's Red Data List due to significant damage from deer grazing.



Flower of the Japanese wood poppy (Japanese name: Shirane Aoi)



A colony of the Japanese wood poppy on Mt. Shirane in Nikko



The Italian Embassy Villa Memorial Park on the shore of Lake Chuzenji

With its high altitude and cool air, Nikko in summer has long attracted visitors as a retreat from the heat. This is especially true around Lake Chuzenji, an area that prospered as an international summer resort. Its clear waters carry a cool breeze, while the chirping of the Ezo-haru cicada from the dense shoreline forests signals summer's arrival. Elsewhere, in the lush Kirifuri Highland, summer flowers bloom and the songs of wild birds echo. The season is also marked by cultural traditions, such as the Tohaisai festival, where the trail to Mt. Nantai opens at midnight for climbers to ascend and witness a solemn sunrise from the summit.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Experience a summer retreat at the British Embassy Villa Memorial Park



The British Embassy Villa Memorial Park from Lake Chuzenji

- The British Embassy Villa Memorial Park, located on the shore of Lake Chuzenji, was once a summer retreat for the British embassy in Japan. Today, visitors can enjoy authentic British-style afternoon tea and the same lakeside views that diplomats once admired.



The terrace facing Lake Chuzenji



Afternoon tea (Tea and scones)

Hiking in the Kirifuri Highland

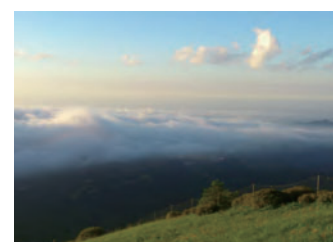


View from the Tenku Kairo (walkway)

- At an altitude of over 1,000 meters, the Kirifuri Highland is about 10 degrees cooler than the plains of the Kanto region. In summer, it is covered in a variety of flowers, including Nikko daylilies.



Blooming Nikko daylilies



Kirifuri Highland in the early morning

Autumn: A tapestry of Autumn Leaves Shaped by Elevation Changes



Kusamomiji at the Senjogahara Marshland

In autumn, the mountains of Nikko come alive with the colours of over 20 types of maple trees and other foliage. The autumn leaves of Nikko are a work of natural art created by a 2,000-metre difference in elevation. The colours are said to be composed of five shades: red, yellow, and orange from the leaves, deep green from the coniferous trees, and the deep blue of the lakes. The sight of bright red maple leaves illuminated by the light is particularly captivating, as is the Kusamomiji (grass autumn leaves) of the Senjogahara Marshland and the Odashirogahara Marshland, where the grasslands turn red and yellow. Because the colours change gradually from higher altitudes, visitors can enjoy the autumn foliage for an extended period. This shifting panorama of colours, created by the varied elevations, is a spectacular autumn view unique to Nikko.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Enjoy Nikko's long autumn foliage season



Autumn leaves at the Lake Sainoko, close to the Lake Chuzenji

- Around October, the Okunikko area offers a spectacular autumn display as the trees along the Lake Chuzenji's shores burst into colours, a beautiful scene made even more stunning by its reflection on the water's surface.



Autumn leaves at the Taiyuin (possession of the Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple)

- In early November, you can enjoy the autumn leaves and cedar-lined avenue alongside the beautifully decorated two shrines and one temple (the UNESCO registered Nikko Toshogu Shrine, Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple, and Nikko Futarasan-Jinja Shrine) in the centre of Nikko.



The stunning gradation of the Kusamomiji (grass autumn leaves) at the Odashirogahara Marshland

Kusamomiji of the marshlands

- Around late September, the grasslands of the Senjogahara Marshland and the Odashirogahara Marshlands turn red and yellow, a phenomenon known as Kusamomiji (grass autumn leaves).
- The Senjogahara Marshland is blanketed in a golden brown, while the Odashirogahara Marshland is covered in a patchwork of colours.



Snowshoeing through a forest of giant trees

In winter, Nikko's location and varied elevations provide just the right amount of snowfall, allowing visitors to enjoy powder snow at Yumoto Ski Resort and see various forms of ice art, such as frozen waterfalls, ice splashes, and jellyfish ice (jellyfish-shaped ice formations that build up on lakeside stakes as water freezes in the strong, cold wind). The diverse terrain invites you to enjoy a range of winter activities, such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, or to discover a mindful moment while walking through the snowy Senjogahara Marshland. Nikko is also home to a tradition of harvesting natural ice, which relies on the harsh cold environment. Adding to the winter's appeal, Nikko is easily accessible, at just about two hours from central Tokyo with no transfers required.

Places and Experiences That Tell the Story

Frozen waterfalls of the Unryu Valley

- The intense cold of Okunikko creates a spectacular natural phenomenon: waterfalls that freeze solid. The most famous of all is the frozen waterfall at the Unryu Valley, which towers 100 metres high and is celebrated nationwide as a magnificent ice spectacle.



A giant waterfall transforms into a pillar of ice in the Unryu Valley

Magical ice art on the lakeside

- On the Lake Chuzenji and the Lake Yunoko, where winter temperatures can drop to -20°C , the water along the shore freezes, creating magical scenery known as ice splashes and jellyfish ice.



Ice splashes on the shore of the Lake Chuzenji

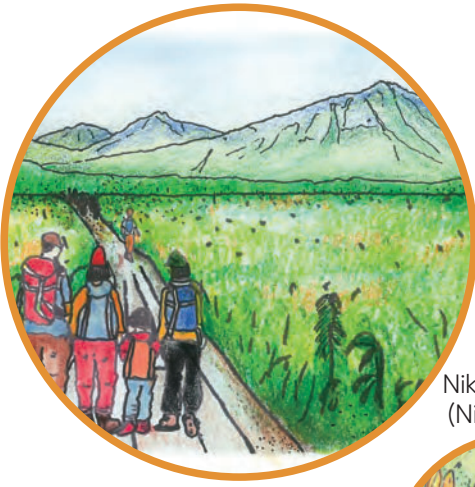
Powder snow and winter sports

- Nikko's light, dry powder snow is perfect for winter sports. This ideal, low-moisture snow is created when clouds from the Sea of Japan cross over Mt. Shirane in Nikko.



Enjoying cross-country skiing at the Koutoku Onsen

Nikko Area's Iconic Resources



Nikko Daylilies (Nikkokisuge)

Senjogahara Marshland



Yugawa River Fly Fishing



Lake Yunoko



International Summer Resort Memorial Facilities



Lake Chuzenji



Yudaki Falls



Ryuzu Falls



Kegon Falls



Yuba*, Sansho pepper**, Yokan***, etc.

* Yuba is a well-known delicacy of Nikko, which is made by lifting the "skin" that forms on top of soy milk when boiled.
 ** Sansho pepper is the peppercorns of the prickly ash tree. It is a spice with a bright, citrusy flavor and a unique tingling sensation on the tongue.
 ***A traditional Japanese sweet made from red bean paste, sugar, and agar-agar, which is set into a firm jelly.



The UNESCO World Heritage Site "Shrines and Temples of Nikko"



Phenology Calendar



Open in PDF »

A phenology calendar tracks the nature and human activities of a region season by season.

This page is Nikko's Phenology Calendar and lists the many charms of Nikko tailored to each season. As you can see, Nikko offers numerous highlights, whether spring, summer, autumn, or winter. We hope you will visit to discover these charms unique to the seasons of Nikko..

Category	Unique Features	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
		Season												
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yuba (tofu skin) • Yokan (sweet bean jelly). • Shiso-wrapped chili peppers. • Nikko Kanaya Hotel's 100-year curry. • Cuisine featuring Himemasu salmon • Scones made from the British Embassy recipe. • Kirifuri Highland Beef. • Naturally frozen ice. • Chitake mushrooms. • Nikko HIMITSU Pork. • Kinome sansho (Japanese pepper buds) 	Harvesting naturally frozen ice.				Kinome sansho (Japanese pepper buds)			Strawberry picking at Senjigahara Farm.				Mizu-yokan (sweet bean jelly).	
		Summer												
Festivals and Rituals		Bushasai Festival (Archery ritual).			Gohanshiki	Emme no Maji dance.	Kannon-ko (Kannon gathering).	Furazenojo (boat ritual on Chuzenji Lake).						
		Spring												
Historic Sites and Culture	Okunikko Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shodo Shonin and Shugendo (mountain asceticism) • Tachiki Kannon statue • History of the prohibition on women, Nyonindo, and Mikoshi 	Bushasai Festival (Archery ritual).			Gohanshiki	Yayoi Festival	1,000 Samurai Procession in Spring							
		Autumn												
Historic Sites and Culture	Nikko Town Area and Surroundings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rokken-chaya teahouse and the townscape of Chugushi • Nishirokuban Enchi • Kotoku Ranch • Ruins of Nishizawa Gold Mine 													
		Winter												
Historic Sites and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Embassy Villa Memorial Park • Italian Embassy Villa Memorial Park • Lake Chuzenji Boat House • Tokyo Angling and Country Club • Yakushi-yu hot spring at Onsen-ji Temple 													
		Summer												
Historic Sites and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamozawa Imperial Villa • Nikko Kanaya Hotel • Statue of Taisuke Itagaki and the two shrines and one temple of Nikko. • Katsu Kaishu, who protected cultural assets. 													
		Autumn												
Historic Sites and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kammagafuchi Abyss and Bake-Shrine • Nikko Futarasan-jinja Shrine • Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple • Jigendo Hall • Taiyuin • Takio Kodo path which were very prosperous 													
		Winter												
Historic Sites and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nikko Toshogu Shrine • The world's longest Nikko Cedar Road • Shinkyō Bridge • Yomeimon Gate • Nikko Kaido Road and Hachiishi-ji Temple • Monks' living quarters in Sammai, which were very prosperous 													
		Summer												
Historic Sites and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nikko Kodo Road and Hachiishi-ji Temple • Monks' living quarters in Sammai, which were very prosperous 													
		Autumn												
Historic Sites and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nikko Kodo Road and Hachiishi-ji Temple • Monks' living quarters in Sammai, which were very prosperous 													
		Winter												

Landscape and Nature	Landscape Scenery	Wetland Scenery	Lake Scenery	Waterfall Scenery	Roads & Scenery
<p>The Nikko mountain range and volcanoes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mt. Nantai ● Mt. Shirane, the highest peak north of central Japan ● Mt. Nyoho ● Mt. Taro ● Yumoto Onsen, a strong sulfur hot spring. 	<p>Slowly flowing Yugaawa River</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A sky full of stars over Senjogahara Marshland. ● Mysterious yachibozu tussocks of the wetlands. 	<p>Winter activities in powder snow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. ● Ice Skating 	<p>The scenery of Lake Chuzenji changing with the seasons and time of day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fantastic scenery of fog floating on the lake. ● Lake view and sunrise from Akechidaira. ● Views of the spring-fed Lake Yunoko. ● Lakes and marshes formed through various geological processes. 	<p>Many waterfalls, often referred to as the '48 waterfalls'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kegon Falls ● Kirifuri Falls, depicted by Katsushika Hokusai ● Ryuzu Falls ● Urami Falls, composed in a haiku by Basho. 	<p>Driving routes offering diverse scenery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Driving routes offering diverse scenery.
<p>Activities</p>	<p>Deer fences protecting the wetlands of Okunikko.</p> <p>The 'Lady' of Odashirogahara (White Birch).</p> <p>Bamboo grass covering the area around Senjogahara Marshland.</p>	<p>Cherry blossoms (Sakura)</p> <p>Azalea</p> <p>Spring verdure</p>	<p>Hiking on trails extending throughout Okunikko.</p> <p>Full-scale mountaineering in the Nikko mountain range.</p> <p>Road cycling</p> <p>Camping at Yumoto Campsite and Shobogahama Beach Campsite.</p> <p>Nikko, a sanctuary for fly fishing.</p> <p>Kayaking and SUP (Stand Up Paddleboarding)</p> <p>Summer retreat experience at the former embassy villas of Lake Chuzenji</p>	<p>Reed fields of Senjogahara Marshland.</p> <p>Autumn grass colours at Odashirogahara Marshland.</p> <p>Autumn foliage with beautiful leaves in Nikko.</p>	<p>Ice skating</p>
<p>Plants & Vegetation</p>	<p>Asian black bear</p> <p>Japanese macaque</p> <p>Japanese serow (protected species)</p> <p>Japanese deer</p>	<p>Arrival and wintering of winter birds</p> <p>Spawning of frogs</p> <p>Spawning of Japanese black salamanders</p> <p>Child-rearing period for mammals</p>	<p>Arrival and breeding of summer birds</p> <p>Asian house martins around Kegon Falls</p> <p>Spawning of Kajika frogs</p> <p>Spawning of Japanese black salamanders</p> <p>Child-rearing period for mammals</p>	<p>Upstream run of hinemasa salmon</p> <p>Mating call (deer)</p>	<p>Arrival and wintering of winter birds</p>
<p>Animals</p>	<p>Yumoto Onsen, which is affected by the Sea of Japan climate in winter.</p> <p>Differences in weather depending on the altitude, as well as the location between the Sea of Japan climate and the Pacific climate.</p>	<p>Lingering snow Season</p> <p>Spectacular ice scenery in Unryu Valley</p> <p>Ice splashes and jellyfish ice at Lake Chuzenji</p> <p>A world of snow and ice at minus 20 degrees Celsius</p> <p>Winter snow scenery</p> <p>Freezing of Lake Yunoko</p> <p>Rime ice at Senjogahara Marshland</p>	<p>Cool summers in the highlands</p> <p>A comfortable climate with little rainy season</p> <p>Sea of clouds at Kirifuri Highland</p>	<p>Odashirogahara Marshland turning into a lake after heavy typhoon rains</p> <p>Morning mist at Odashirogahara Marshland.</p> <p>Rime ice at Senjogahara Marshland</p>	<p>Ice splashes and jellyfish ice at Lake Chuzenji</p> <p>Winter snow scenery</p> <p>Freezing of Lake Yunoko</p> <p>Rime ice at Senjogahara Marshland</p>
<p>Climate</p>					

Experiencing Okunikko

Four seasons



16 Experiences to Truly Enjoy the Nikko Area

Easily accessible from Tokyo, Nikko offers authentic history, culture, and nature within a National Park and World Heritage site. It is a place where you can discover truly special, perhaps even life-changing, moments.

01

Experience Ancient History

Nikko is a place where you can experience a harmony of nature and culture, with a history of mountain asceticism and shrines closely tied to its rich natural environment. The World Heritage shrines and temples of Nikko, and customs such as the Yayoi Festival, are key to understanding the history of the Nikko National Park. The area also holds the charm of a sacred site with 1,200 years of history, featuring places like the Takino-o Kodo ancient path and the Bake Jizo statues of Kanmangafuchi Abyss. We invite you to experience not only the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Shrines and Temples of Nikko”, but also the ancient paths of Shugendō asceticism.

7.5 meters tall



The Hall of Three Buddhas (Rinnoji Temple)



Nemuri-neko (The Sleeping Cat Carving)



The Carving of The Three Monkeys



Bake Jizo Statues(Kanmangafuchi Abyss)

Related Stories

- 1-1 Shugendō and Mountain Asceticism
- 1-2 History and Culture in Harmony with Nature
- 1-3 Cultural Growth and Connection through Transport
- 1-6 Festivals and Traditions that Weave Nikko’s Appeal
- 1-7 The People Who Make Nikko Special
- 1-10 Savouring Local Culture Through Food

more info

Walking Map of NikkoHistorical



History and Culture



Nikko World Heritage Japan



Shrines and Temples of Nikko



The Shrines and Temples of Nikko (UNESCO)



02

Experience Modern History

Since the Meiji era (1868–1912), Nikko flourished as a summer retreat for diplomats, and it remains a place where you can experience the harmony of nature and culture. At the Italian and British Embassy Villa Memorial Parks, you can relive the summer resort culture of that time. The moments spent gazing at the lake and mountains from a sofa in an ambassador's villa are truly special.



British Embassy villa Memorial Park



Gazing at Lake Chuzenji from the second-floor veranda



Enjoy tea and scones at the in-house cafe.

Related substories

- 1-4 Places to Stay and Visit Shaped by Faith and International Influences
- 1-7 The People Who Make Nikko Special
- 1-10 Savouring Local Culture Through Food
- 3-2 Summer: Feeling the Coolness of Nature

more info

British Embassy
Villa Memorial Park



Shrines and
Temples of Nikko



Italian Embassy
Villa Memorial Park



How Nikko Became a
Prime Resort
Destination in Japan

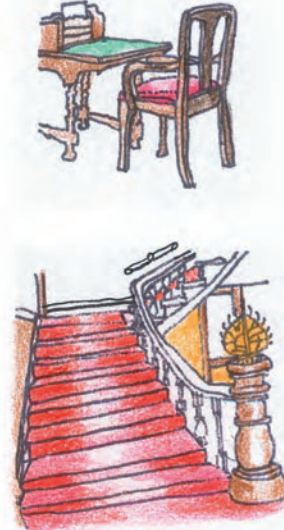


03

Accommodation, Long Stays, and Hot Springs

At historic Western-style hotels such as the Kanaya Hotel, you can enjoy a historical atmosphere that blends Japanese and Western styles and spend a luxurious time immersed in Nikko's history. At Yumoto Onsen, a hot spring with 1,200 years of history located on the shores of Lake Yunoko, you can see steam rising and the green water turning cloudy white, allowing you to experience history along with the scent of sulphur.

To enjoy this relaxed pace, the night sky, and the morning scenery, we recommend staying overnight to fully experience all that Nikko has to offer.



Nikko Kanaya Hotel

Related substories

1-4 Places to Stay and Visit Shaped by Faith and International Influences

1-5 Hot Springs and a Culture of Healing

more info

Chuzenji Onsen



Nikko Onsen



Okunikko Yumoto Onsen



Types of Accommodation in Nikko



04

Festivals

Nikko has many festivals related to the World Heritage shrines and one temple. The Yayoi Festival and the Hyakumono-Zoroi Sennin Musha Gyoretsu (Procession of a Thousand Warriors) play particularly important roles. These festivals are deeply connected to the history and culture of the people living in this temple town. Other festivals include the Mt. Nantai Tohaitaisai festival, another example of local people passing down the culture and tradition.

Nikko Toshogu Shrine

Yabusame Shinji
(Horseback Archery)
*17th May & 16th Oct



Hyakumono-Zoroi Sennin Musha Gyoretsu
(Procession of a Thousand warriors)
*18th May & 17th Oct



Nikko Futarasan-Jinja Shrine

Yayoi Festival
*13th to 17th April



Kakuchō Yatai Kuridashi
*Town floats are brought out



Meishi Kokan
*Ceremonial Greeting

Mt. Nantai Tohaitaisai Festival
*31st July to 7th Aug



Related substories

1-6 Festivals and Traditions that Weave Nikko's Appeal

more info

Nikko Futarasan-Jinja Shrine



Nikko Toshogu Shrine Autumn Festival



Nikko Toshogu Shrine



Yayoi Festival



Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple Website



Nantaisan Tohai Kosha Taisai (Mt. Nantai Climbing Festival)



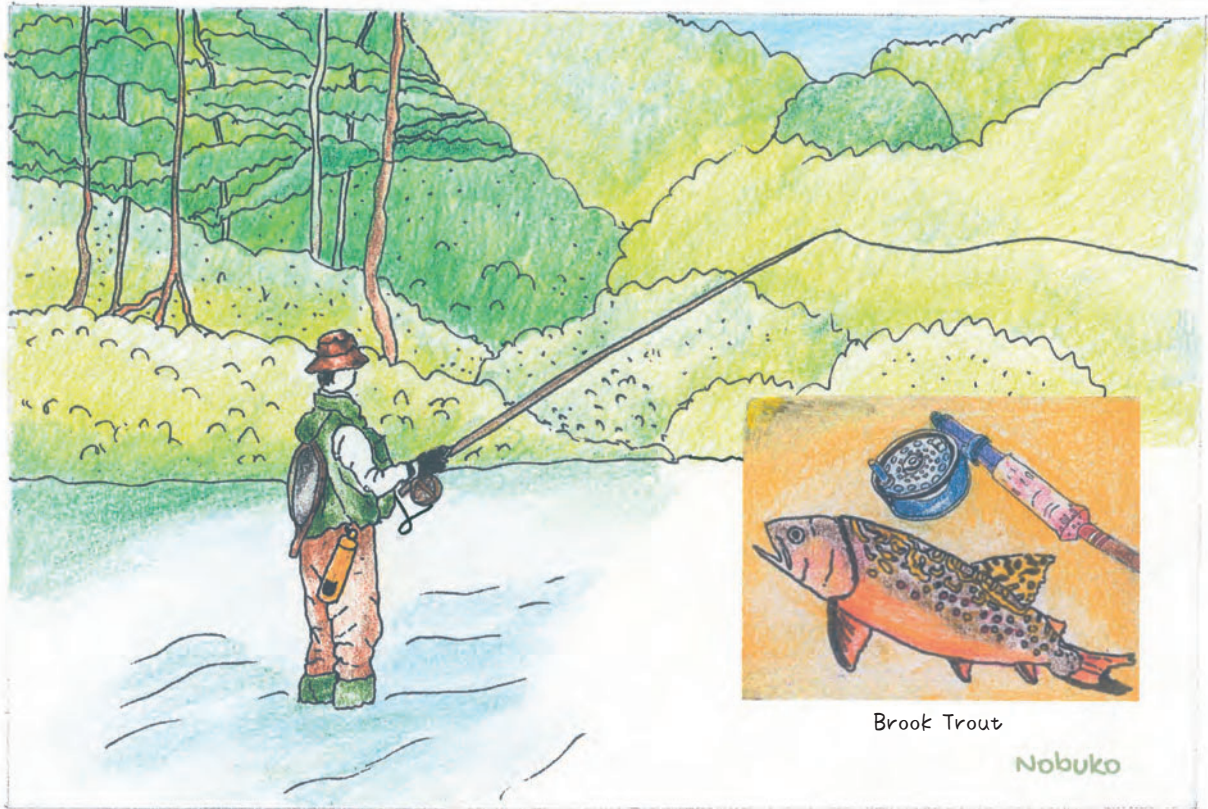
Nikko Toshogu Shrine Annual Grand Spring Festival



05

Fishing

Nikko is the birthplace of fly-fishing in Japan. You can enjoy the sport in the Yugawa River, a natural setting steeped in history and tradition. The river's flow has the feel of Scotland, the homeland of Thomas Glover, who first introduced fly-fishing to Japan here in 1902.



Brook Trout

Nobuko

Related substories

1-8 The Story of Nikko's Fishing Culture

more info

Lake Yunoko & Yugawa River

The Yugawa River and the Father of Fly-Fishing in Japan



Lake Chuzenji

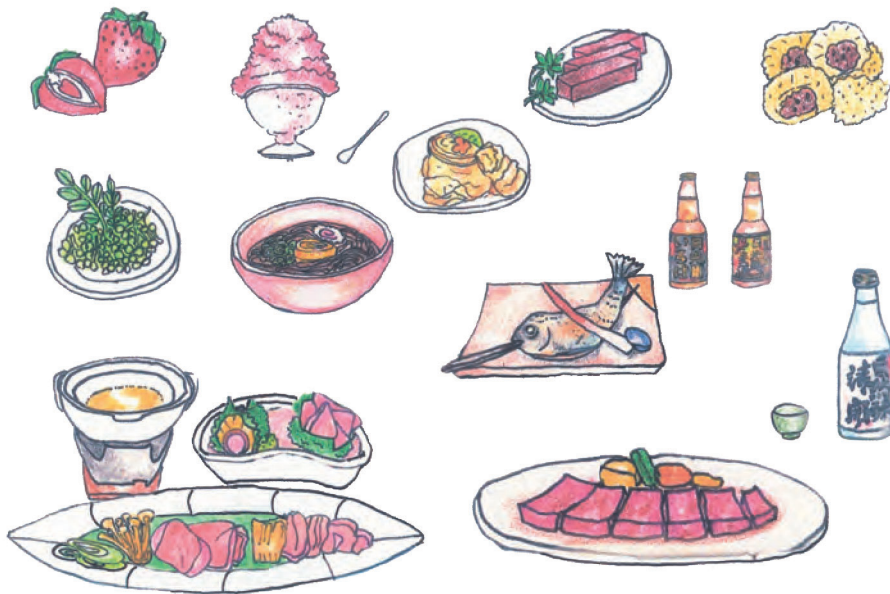
Freshwater Fish



06

Food

Nikko has a unique food culture that reflects its historical and cultural background. In particular, there are many specialities related to water, including Yukan (sweet bean jelly), Yuba (tofu skin), Himemasu salmon, Strawberries, and Sansho (Japanese pepper). We hope you will enjoy the unique flavours of the region while sensing Nikko's nature, history, and culture through these foods.



Related substories

1-10 Savouring Local Culture Through Food

more info

Yuba



Strawberry picking at Nikko Strawberry Park



Yuba – Nikko's Local Delicacy



Must-Try Culinary Delights in Nikko: Savor the Flavors of Tradition and Nature



Yukan



Strolling around Nishimachi Nikko



Freshwater Fish



Foodie Tour of Nikko



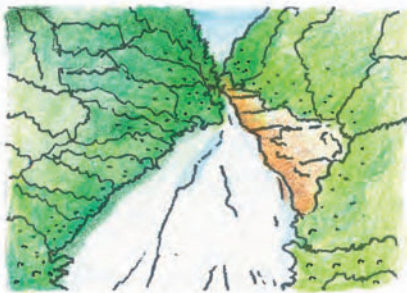
07

Waterfall Scenery

Nikko is home to many beautiful waterfalls, including Urami Falls, Kirifuri Falls, Kegon Falls, Ryuzu Falls, and Yudaki Falls. You can enjoy the scenery created by the flow of water and the differences in elevation. Some of these waterfalls have also been featured in ukiyo-e woodblock prints.



Ryuzu Falls



Yudaki Falls



Kegon Falls

Kirifuri's Hidden Three Falls



Tamasudare Falls



Chōji Falls



Makkura Falls

Related substories

- 2-1 Landscapes Woven by Volcanoes and Water
- 2-2 Waterfalls and Clear Streams as Natural Art
- 2-4 Varied Scenery Shaped by Geology and Landforms

more info

Yudaki Falls



Urami Falls



Ryuzu Falls



Kirifuri Falls



Kegon Falls



Hokusai - A Tour of the Waterfalls of the Provinces



Nikko offers a wide variety of walking and mountain trails for everyone to enjoy, from strolls along lakeshores and marshlands that can be done in casual shoes like sneakers, to full-scale mountain climbing on peaks like Mt. Nantai. Nikko is a great place to make wonderful memories with family and friends through these nature walks and hikes.



Related substories >>>

- 1-9** Memories of Nikko that connect Generations
- 2-3** The Story of Marshlands and Grasslands
- 2-5** A Variety of Activities Formed by the Natural Environment
- 3-2** Summer: Feeling the Coolness of Nature
- 3-3** Autumn: A tapestry of Autumn Leaves Shaped by Elevation Changes

more info

Okunikko Guide Map >>>



Hiking course >>>



Oku-Nikko
Hiking Guid Map >>>



In Nikko, you can enjoy a wide variety of outdoor activities, including hiking, cycling, nature watching, kayaking, and stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) as well as snowshoeing, ice climbing, and skiing during the winter. These activities let you go beyond observing nature and have deep experiences filled with learning and emotion, making new discoveries that are impossible in the city.



Trail running



Stand-Up Paddleboarding (SUP)



Cycling

Related substories

- 1-8 The Story of Nikko's Fishing Culture
- 2-3 The Story of Marshlands and Grasslands
- 2-5 A Variety of Activities Formed by the Natural Environment
- 3-1 Spring: When Flowers Colour the Mountainsides
- 3-2 Summer: Feeling the Coolness of Nature
- 3-3 Autumn: A tapestry of Autumn Leaves Shaped by Elevation Changes

more info

NATIONAL PARK MOUNTAIN RUNNING NIKKO



Nikko Nature Guides



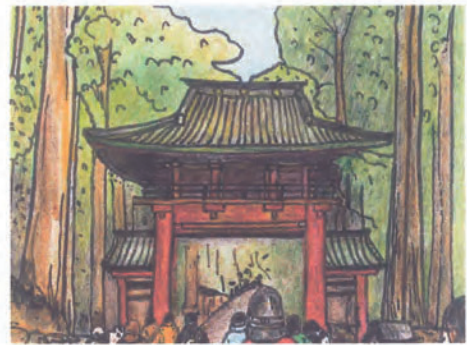
10

Guided Tours

By participating in a guided tour, you can have experiences that are difficult to find on your own, which can deepen your understanding of Nikko. For example, there are guided tours explaining the nature of Senjogahara Marshland, as well as guides for the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Shrines and Temples of Nikko” provided by their clergy. Okunikko also has many nature and activity guides. Hiring a guide deepens the unique appeal of Nikko, offering a variety of experiences and insights.



Nature tour



That is the Romon gate of Nikko Futarasan-Jinja Shrine!



Related substories

»» **2-7** Exploring Ideas in Nikko for a Future Coexisting with Nature

more info

Nikko Nature Guides



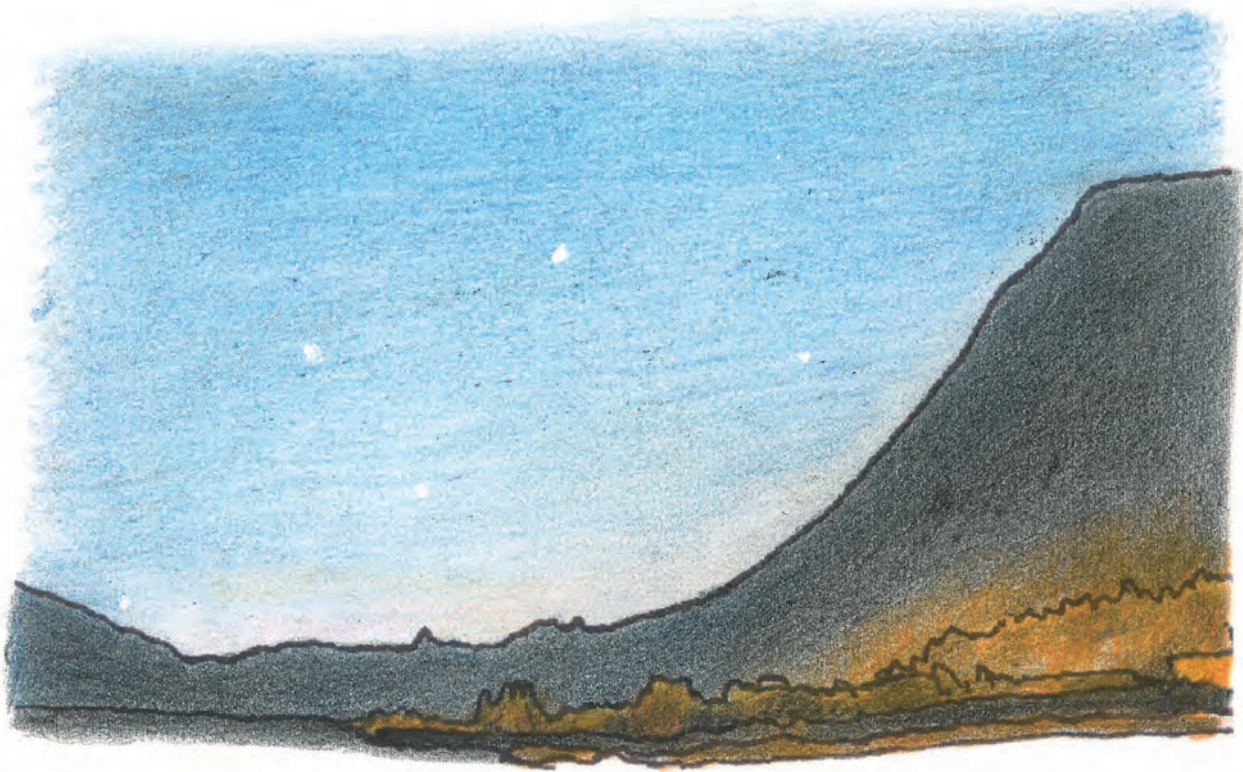
Free Guided Tour (The World Heritage Shrines and Temples of Nikko)



11

Starry Skies

Okunikko is at a high altitude and far from city lights, making it a wonderful place to enjoy beautiful starry skies and the Milky Way. We hope you will stay overnight to fully appreciate the star-filled heavens.



Related substories



2-8 Unwind to Nature's Rhythm Beneath Starry Skies

more info

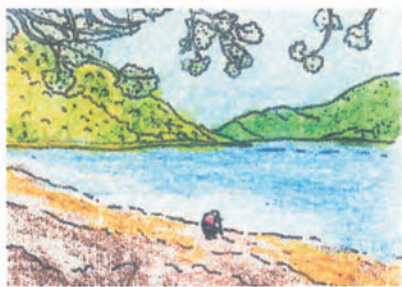
Starry Night in Nikko: Connection between Nikko and its stars



12

Relaxing Time & Retreats

Okunikko offers many opportunities to slow down and refresh yourself in nature. It's a place to find quiet, special moments. Spend an afternoon simply gazing at the lake from an embassy villa, or enjoy the luxurious, peaceful atmosphere of a quiet hotel. Watch the sunset from the lakeshore, or just see the lake glimmer through sun-dappled trees. These are the special moments that define a relaxing retreat here.



South Shore of Lake Chuzenji



Gazing at Lake Chuzenji from a hotel



Lake Yunoko

Related substories >>>

1-4 Places to Stay and Visit Shaped by Faith and International Influences

1-5 Hot Springs and a Culture of Healing

2-8 Unwind to Nature's Rhythm Beneath Starry Skies

more info

[Nikko Hotel Guide](#) >>



[Types of Accommodation in Nikko](#) >>



13

Observing Plants & Birds

The marshlands and forests of Okunikko host a rich ecosystem, inhabited by colourful plants, many animals, and wild birds. In particular, you can spot birds such as the Siberian stonechat and the chestnut-eared bunting, as well as Latham's snipe, which travels from the Southern Hemisphere. The grasslands, echoing with a chorus of birds, are truly a paradise for birdwatching.



Nikko daylilies



Caryopteris divaricata



Bigleaf ligularia



Nuthatch



Hawkweed oxtongue



Tone Azami (Tone thistle)



Sobana



Narcissus flycatcher



Japanese deer



Arrow-leaf tearthumb



Blue-and-white Flycatcher



Japanese primrose



Leichthins Lily



Great Burnet



Ladybells



Japanese red fox



Japanese Snipe



Japanese crabapple

Related substories

- 2-3 The Story of Marshlands and Grasslands
- 2-4 Varied Scenery Shaped by Geology and Landforms
- 2-6 Encounters with Diverse Wildlife
- 3-1 Spring: When Flowers Colour the Mountainsides
- 3-2 Summer: Feeling the Coolness of Nature
- 3-3 Autumn: A tapestry of Autumn Leaves Shaped by Elevation Changes

more info

Nature in Oku Nikko



Nikko : The Perfect Getaway for Nature Lovers



Plants & Animals Nikko National Park



Nikko Nature Guides



Birdwatching Walking Tour in Oku-Nikko



Nikko Botanical Garden



14

Winter Experiences

One of the highlights of Nikko is the range of nature experiences available in winter. Ice skating is popular in Nikko, and it's an activity that the whole family can enjoy at places like the Nikko Kirifuri Skate Centre. The quiet forests, covered with fluffy snow, are also perfect for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Being in this crisp, white world is a chance to feel a deep sense of peace and connection to the landscape. The beautiful winter scenery unique to this season is not to be missed, such as the silent world of powder snow, frozen waterfalls, and ice splash formations.

Note: Areas like the Unryu Valley can be very dangerous, so you should take a guided tour.



Ice climbing



Ice hockey



Ice skating



Cross-country skiing



Snowshoeing

Related substories

2-5 A Variety of Activities Formed by the Natural Environment

3-4 Winter: Making the Most of Ice and Snow

more info

Warm Up With Nikko's Winter Sports



Okunikko Snow Cycling



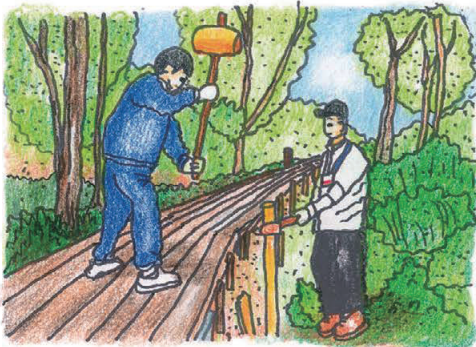
Experience Nikko in Winter



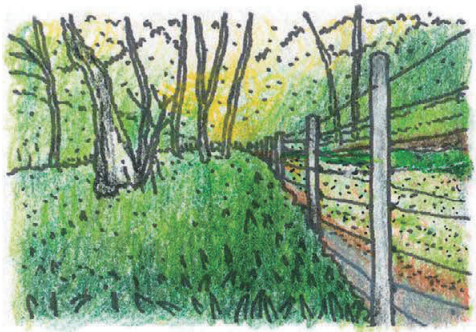
IceBucks (Professional Ice Hockey Team)



We invite you to deepen your understanding of various aspects of Nikko, such as how its beautiful scenery was formed, its historical facts, and the efforts made to protect its environment. Nikko's beautiful landscape has been shaped by its historical background and environmental protection initiatives. To protect the local nature, many people are dedicated to activities such as removing invasive plant species and installing deer fences. Notably, the precious natural environment of Senjogahara and Odashirogahara Marshlands is protected by a 17-kilometre-long deer fence that surrounds it. Furthermore, understanding of nature is deepened through school trips and nature guides. Invasive plant removal activities by citizens and volunteers are ongoing, helping protect Okunikko's environment.



Boardwalk stake driving boardwalks at Senjogahara Marshland



Deer fence



Removal of Cutleaf cornflower

Related substories

» 2-7 Exploring Ideas in Nikko for a Future Coexisting with Nature

more info

Nature in Oku Nikko



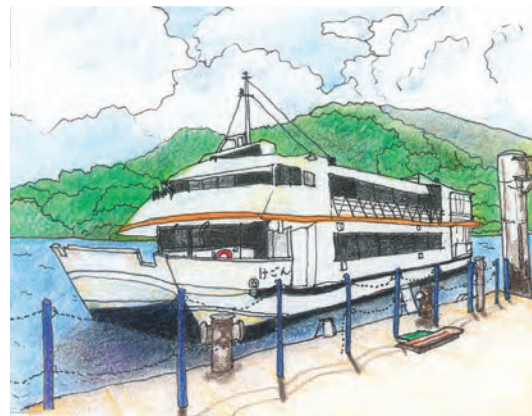
16

Lake Chuzenji

Lake Chuzenji offers a perfect blend of sightseeing and outdoor adventure. You can visit famous sites such as Kegon Falls, the British and Italian Embassy Villa Memorial Parks, the Nikko Natural Science Museum, and Nikko-zan Chuzen-ji Temple, or take a relaxing tour of the lake aboard a sightseeing boat. Renting rowboats and swan boats is a particular favourite among international guests, especially when the weather is warm. For those who love the outdoors, the area offers hiking and cycling, as well as stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) and Kayaking allowing you to spend calm moments on the water. There is also a campsite on the north shore at Shobugahama for a full immersion in nature.



East Shore:
visit Kegon Falls, the British and Italian Embassy villa Memorial Parks, the Nikko Natural Science Museum, Nikko-zan Chuzen-ji Temple, and the sightseeing boat pier.



Sightseeing boat

Related substories

- 1-4 Places to Stay and Visit Shaped by Faith and International Influences
- 1-8 The Story of Nikko's Fishing Culture
- 1-10 Savoring Local Culture Through Food
- 2-1 Landscapes Woven by Volcanoes and Water
- 2-2 Waterfalls and Clear Streams as Natural Art
- 2-5 A Variety of Activities Formed by the Natural Environment
- 2-8 Unwind to Nature's Rhythm Beneath Starry Skies
- 3-1 Spring: When Flowers Colour the Mountainsides
- 3-2 Summer: Feeling the Coolness of Nature
- 3-3 Autumn: A tapestry of Autumn Leaves Shaped by Elevation Changes
- 3-4 Winter: Making the Most of Ice and Snow

more info

Lake Chuzenji
(Nikko Official Guide)



Lake Chuzenji
(Visit Tochigi)



Lake Chuzenji
(JNTO)



A Day at Regal Lake
Chuzenji
(Nikko Official Guide)



Q Can we fish in Okunikko?

A You can fish for trout, mainly brook trout, as well as smelt in late autumn. Fishing is allowed in Lake Yunoko, Yugawa River, and Lake Chuzenji. Each has its own target species, seasons, and rules, so please check in advance. It is said that there were initially no fish in Okunikko. However, charr were released in the Meiji era (1868–1912), followed by the stocking of trout. From the Meiji era onwards, as villas for dignitaries from various countries were built along the shores of Lake Chuzenji, foreign visitors fished for trout in the summer, making it the birthplace of fly fishing in Japan. Some restaurants and shops serve their own fish, which they catch in Lake Chuzenji. You can experience the activities of our modern ancestors passed down to the present day.

Related Stories >>> [1-4](#), [1-8](#), [1-10](#)

Q How should I check the weather forecast in Okunikko?

A If you search for "Weather in Nikko", you might find the weather in lower altitudes, which may not be accurate. It is better to narrow down the location by postcode or place name, such as Okunikko, Lake Chuzenji, Nikko Yumoto Onsen, or Kegon Falls. It is normal for the weather to differ even between the Kegon Falls area and Yumoto Onsen, even though they are not far apart. The terrain of Okunikko, surrounded by mountains, and the boundaries of the climate have an effect, which is particularly noticeable in winter.

Related Stories >>> [2-1](#), [2-4](#)

Q Is the Onsen (spring water) quality different in Okunikko's onsens?

A Okunikko has 'Yumoto Onsen', 'Kotoku Onsen', and 'Chuzenji Onsen', which are in different locations, but they all draw hot spring water from the same source in 'Yumoto Onsen'. Described as "Sulfur-containing Calcium-Sodium Sulfate/Hydrogen Carbonate Spring (Hydrogen Sulfide Type)", it is a sulfur hot spring that smells a bit like boiled eggs. If you visit Yumoto Onsen, you can see sulfur-scented steam and bubbles rising from the bottom of the puddles, whispering of volcanic activity. One wonders how Shōdō Shōnin, who first discovered the hot water, bathed in it. There are hot springs with different water qualities in the city area near the UNESCO registered shrines and temples, as well as in the Kirifuri Highlands, so if you enjoy onsen, it would be fun to visit these as well.

Related Stories >>> [1-1](#), [1-5](#)

Q I want to eat local specialities, what do you recommend?

A There are famous dishes such as trout, Yuba, Yokan, strawberries, Sansho pepper, and natural ice. In the Nikko city area near the Shrines and Temple, Yuba and Yokan are traditional foods and popular souvenirs. Yokan is often associated with summer, but in Nikko, it is a winter food included in Osechi (New Year's dishes). Before refrigeration technology was born, it was a feast eaten only in the winter. On the other hand, since there were no permanent residents in Okunikko until modern times, there are few food culture

traditions. However, after trout was released in the lakes in the Meiji era (1868–1912), it became a famous dish of the region. Himemasu salmon (Kokanee salmon) is especially popular for its delicious taste. Strawberry picking is also available here in the cool summer. Sansho pepper is another Nikko speciality. Sansho-no-wakame-ni (young Sansho buds boiled in soy sauce) is so delicious that it becomes addictive. Each household has its own unique taste, so it is good to try some when you are in Nikko. Finally, shaved ice made from natural ice is a popular summertime dessert not to be missed. The ice is made by freezing pure spring water in winter using natural cold air, then stored in icehouses. I'm sure you will discover many more specialities, many of which have a close connection to the region's climate and history.

Related Stories >>> [1-10](#), [3-2](#), [3-4](#)

Q Are there things to do at night?

A There is hardly any urban nightlife. It is even hard to find shops open at night. However, if the sky is clear, you should step out of your accommodation, find a place with few streetlights and look up at the sky. You will see a breathtaking starry sky spread out above you. Lake Yunoko, Senjogahara, Lake Chuzenji, and Kirifuri Highlands are ideal for stargazing. If you are coming by car, take a night drive, you may see wild animals along the roadside, a bit like a night safari. Also, sunset at Lake Chuzenji, where the sky and lake are dyed madder red, Kirifuri Highland in the morning with a sea of clouds spreading below your eyes, and the "Lady" (a famous birch tree) appearing from the morning mist at Odashirogahara are also fantastic natural sceneries to be seen in the area.

Related Stories >>> [2-3](#), [2-4](#), [2-6](#), [2-8](#)

Q When is the best time to see autumn leaves?

A You can enjoy autumn leaves between early October and mid-November. On high-altitude mountains like Mt. Shirane, autumn foliage begins in late September, but for easier viewing, the change of leaves usually starts in early to mid-October. Generally, the colouring progresses from high altitudes to low altitudes. Since the elevation difference in Nikko is large, you will be able to see the colours change as you travel around. Hatchodejima Peninsula, which reaches into Lake Chuzenji, has diverse vegetation and looks like an artist's colour palette. It is not only the trees that change colour. The grass, autumn leaves, and the mosaic patterns seen at Odashirogahara change, and the reed fields of Senjogahara, shining in gold, are also wonderful. You can enjoy the natural colours from a car/bus, ropeway, or sightseeing boat, but you can also walk in the forest, or admire them from the lake on a SUP or kayak, which can also be a special experience.

Related Stories >>> [1-3](#), [2-2](#), [2-3](#), [2-4](#), [2-5](#), [3-3](#)

Q What is the Sakura like in Nikko?

A Due to the 1,000m elevation difference across Nikko, you can enjoy cherry blossoms for a long season, from late March in the lower Imaichi area, April around the Shrines and Temple of Nikko, and early May in Okunikko. In Okunikko, lovely pink Oyama-zakura (Sargent's cherry) dot the shores of Lake Chuzenji and Lake Yunoko. Senjugahama Beach, on the west bank of Lake Chuzenji, is particularly picturesque. The blossoms here colour the lake against the backdrop of Mt. Nantai, offering a soothing view for hikers.

Related Stories >>> [3-1](#)

Q I'm scared of bears, they won't appear, will they?

A Bears won't "appear"... but they are there. This might sound like a play on words, but the difference in perception is significant.

The bears in Honshu are Asian black bears (Tsukinowaguma), and the entire Okunikko area is their habitat. It is not that bears "appear" (come out to where we are), but rather that we humans are entering their habitat. Therefore, whether you encounter one depends on luck.

However, you can lower that probability. For example, if you go to a place with many bear sightings, there are higher chances you will encounter one. We advise checking for recent bear sightings in advance to avoid those areas. For example, if you give food to a hungry bear, don't you feel it might come back there again? It would be best if bears did not learn to associate food with humans.

It is essential to know about bears correctly. We want to be a national park where we can coexist with wildlife, including bears.

Nikko Yumoto Visitor Centre



Related Stories >> **2-6, 2-7**

Q I heard that the Iroha Slope gets incredibly congested during the autumn leaves season...?

A I won't say there is no traffic, but "incredible congestion" only happens a few times a year. 10 to 20 years ago, long weekend traffic jams were the norm. Locals avoided going to Okunikko altogether. However, in recent years, the trend has changed significantly. Sometimes people commute expecting traffic, only to find the roads clear.

It is helpful to know that heavy traffic is likely when the following conditions overlap: 1) Long weekends and peak holidays, 2) Sunny weather, and 3) Recent TV broadcast coverage. This is when everyone wants to visit and can trigger congestion. The busiest points where congestion occurs are Shinkyō Bridge, Akechidaira, and the traffic light at the top of the Iroha Slope on the way to Okunikko. On the way back, it is the traffic light at Hosoo-Daiya Bridge and Shinkyō Bridge.

Perhaps it is good to consider "off-peak tourism". Simply plan your trip so you pass through expected congestion points at times when they are not crowded. For example, try visiting on a weekday, or go up the Iroha Slope early in the morning or sometimes late at night. Gazing at a star-filled sky or the frost melting on the marshland with the morning sun is wonderful.

If travelling by private car, one option is to enter Okunikko from Numata IC on the Kan-Etsu Expressway. If you stay the night in Okunikko and start descending the Iroha Slope in the morning and take the toll road, you will almost never encounter traffic jams. Try off-peak tourism, and you might experience a special Okunikko that no one has discovered!

Related Stories >> **1-3, 2-1, 2-8, 3-3**

Q Is Okunikko open in winter? Can we drive on the roads?

A Yes. Okunikko is open in winter too. People live here. Buses run. However, the only entrance and exit is the Iroha Slope, and winter tyres are a essential if you are driving.

In recent years, there has been less snow near Nikko Station, but if you are planning to drive to Okunikko in the winter, you should be prepared. The further you go, the harsher the weather becomes, with a higher chance of heavy snow.

Also, you should note that the elevation of the Iroha Slope is 500m! Even if the road surface is dry when entering the Iroha Slope, there may be snow or ice halfway up. And since the Iroha Slope is a one-way road, once you enter, you cannot turn back, so please be sure to have winter tyres and equipment when coming to Okunikko.

If you are worried about driving, you can take buses from Tobu-Nikko Station, so we recommend using those. Okunikko in winter is a beautiful, silvery-white world where unique winter activities, such as snowshoeing, await you.

If you plan to drive to Kirifuri Highland, the elevation of the highest point is almost the same as that of Yumoto in Okunikko, so winter equipment is essential when visiting there too.

Related Stories >> [1-3](#), [2-4](#), [2-5](#), [3-4](#)

Q I want to go see Primrose (Kurinsō), where and when should I go?

A Senjugahama, on the west bank of Lake Chuzenji, is the most famous spot to see them, and the best time to visit is from early to mid-June. The original species of Japanese primrose (Kurinsō) is reddish-purple, but in Okunikko, you can see primroses of various colours. The garden of a private house in Senjugahama is particularly famous. This was originally one of the bases of the Tokyo Angling & Country Club. It is said that primroses were planted during the era when the area was lively with ambassadors from various countries.

Since cars are not allowed, one way to visit is to take the low-emission bus. However, on weekends during peak season, the bus can get quite crowded, and sometimes you may not be able to get on. So, if you plan to take the bus, we recommend allowing plenty of time. Alternatively, some people visit by crossing Lake Chuzenji on a sightseeing boat or motorboat, hiking along the lake's shores, or taking an active route by bicycle or kayak.

In recent years, the flowers have spread to various parts of Okunikko, such as along the Yugawa River and Shobugahama, so you may even encounter colonies in unexpected places.

Related Stories >> [1-4](#), [2-5](#), [2-7](#), [3-2](#)

Useful Information

● National Parks of Japan - Nikko National Park



● Ministry of Environment - Nikko National Park



● Visit Nikko -Okunikko



● Yumoto Onsen



● UNESCO - Shrines and Temples of Nikko



● Ramsar Sites Information Service - Oku-Nikko Shitsugen



● Oku-Nikko Shitsugen



● Central Nikko Travel Guide



● Oku-Nikko Travel Guide



● Things to do in Oku-Nikko (Interview)



● Online pamphlets about Nikko (English near the bottom)



● Hiking courses



● Deliver to the future Nikko



● Walking Map of Nikko Historical



● Nikko Guide Map with Bus Stops



● Tobu Lake Chuzenji Cruise



● Nikko Lake Chuzenji Cruise



● Oku-Nikko E-Bike Trip (Nikko Natural Science Museum)



● Nikko Cycling Ciel



Places of Interest

British Embassy Villa Memorial Park.....	P9, 27, 36, 50
Guide-recommended activities	P21, 23, , 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49
Italian Embassy Villa Memorial Park	P9, 24, 27, 36, 50
Kegon Falls	P17, 18, 26, 41, 50, 51
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Mountain asceticism	P6, 7, 9, 15, 35
Mt. Nantai.....	P6, 7, 17, 19, 21, 27, 38, 42, 52, 56
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Nikko National Park Map	P58
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UNESCO World Heritage Site “Shrines and Temples of Nikko”	P7, 9, 14, 28, 30, 35, 37, 44, 55

Nikko National Park Map

Nikko National Park is one of the historic national parks, established on December 4, 1934.



Nikko Sightseeing Map

福島県 Fukushima Prefecture

群馬県 Gunma Prefecture

栃木県 Tochigi Prefecture

... Nikko National Park



Okumade Nikko: Stories that Deepen Your Love for Nikko

Nikko Area Interpretation Master Plan

Version 1 (May 17, 2026)

Produced by : Regional Secretariat for Creating "Okumade Nikko: Stories that Deepen Your Love for Nikko"

Ministry of the Environment, Nikko National Park Office
(Liaison)

In Cooperation with : Oku-Nikko Development Community Council

National Park 'Mankitsu' Project, Nikko Area
Subcommittee

Japan Environmental Education Forum (JEEF)
Association for Interpretation Japan

Illustrations : Nobuko Maebashi

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