

# Daisen-Oki National Park

## Mt. Daisen – Mt. Hiruzen Region



Ministry of the Environment,  
Chugoku - Shikoku Regional Environment Office

## National Parks of Japan

National Parks are designated by the national government for managing areas of exceptionally stunning natural beauty representative of the country of Japan. The system of national parks is in place to preserve high quality nature and wildlife habitat, while also providing natural areas for the people of Japan to enjoy and learn about nature.

Currently, 31 National Parks have been designated around the country, from Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu National Park in the north to Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park in the south.

## About Daisen-Oki National Park

- Designated: 1 February, 1936 (Oki Island region added 10 April, 1963)  
(Shimane peninsula region added 10 April, 1963)  
(Mt. Sanbe region added 10 April, 1963)  
(Mt. Hiruzen region expanded 10 April, 1963)  
(Mt. Kenashi region expanded 26 March, 2002)  
(Mt. Mitoku region expanded 19 March, 2014)

- Total land area: 35,353 ha (Mt. Daisen - Hiruzen region: 22,317 ha)  
Marine park area: 57.5 ha (excluding Mt. Daisen - Hiruzen)

- Prefectures: Tottori, Shimane, Okayama

- Characteristics: Home to the foothills and rugged high regions of a volcanic mountain belt including Mt. Daisen as well as Mt. Hiruzen and Mt. Sanbe, the Daisen - Oki National Park features the tallest mountain ridges in Japan's far western Chugoku region along with the ria coastlines of the Shimane peninsula and volcanic islands of the Oki archipelago. Plant life native to both mountain and seaside regions can be found in the park, which provides breeding grounds for valuable wildlife.

- Park theme: "Mountains and islands where myths interlace  
- A series of volcanoes where the Gods reside,  
and islands that breathe with ancient memories".

- Ministry of the Environment Chugoku - Shikoku Regional Environment Office.  
Tel: 086-223-1577, Okayama Daini Government Office Complex 11F,  
1-4-1 Shimo-Ishii, Kitaaku, Okayama, 700-0907, Japan

- Park contact information  
Ministry of Environment, Yonago Nature Conservation Office: 0859-34-9331  
Yonago Regional Government Office Complex 4F, 124-16 Higashicho, Yonago, Tottori, 683-0067 Japan  
Mt. Daisen Information Center: 0859-52-2165  
40-33 Daisen, Daisen-cho, Saihakugun, Tottori, 689-3318 Japan

## Mt. Daisen – Mt. Hiruzen Region

Mt. Daisen is the highest mountain in the Chugoku region, rising to an elevation of 1729 meters at *Kenamine*. Swiftly rising up to tower over the Sea of Japan and with its breathtaking views of the surrounding area, Mt. Daisen has also been dubbed *Hoki-Fuji* and *Izumo-Fuji* since the peak resembles Mt. Fuji when viewed from Yonago and Matsue (with *Hoki* and *Izumo* referring to local monikers of surrounding regions). Consequently, a 12,403 ha region was first designated in 1936 as the Mt. Daisen National Park in order to represent Western Japan's mountainous landscape.

Afterwards several surrounding regions were added to the park complex like the Mt. Hiruzen area in Okayama Prefecture to the south, the Hiruzen-Sanza foothills and surrounding highlands located in upper, middle and lower Mt. Hiruzen, as well as Shimane Prefecture's Oki archipelago, Shimane peninsula and Mt. Sanbe in 1963, the name was revised to "Daisen - Oki National Park". In 2002 the Mt. Kenashi area with its treasured beech forests and the spiritually revered Mt. Hobutsu areas were added to the park. Following an expansion to the Mt. Mitoku region in 2014, the total land area of the park is now 22,317 ha.

As a natural park featuring lots of mountains and rugged terrain, the Mt. Daisen – Mt. Hiruzen area offers outdoor recreation like mountain climbing, hiking, camping and skiing, enjoyed by many visitors throughout the four seasons.

In Tottori Prefecture a movement is underway to promote eco-tourism under the motif "*Sumayon ni tabi suru*" ("to travel to a place like you live there").



Mt. Daisen viewed from Mt. Hatsuka

## Nature

Up to an elevation of 800 meters, Mt. Daisen is covered with secondary forests like Japanese red pine and Konara oak. At higher elevations between 800 and 1300 meters, an extensive system of natural beech forests can still be found in the Motodani valley, Ooyasumi pass, Jigokudani valley, and between Mt. Senjo and Mt. Yahazugasen.

These beech forests, which are some of the largest in Western Japan, provide a natural refuge for many types of wild fowl and are habitat for over 130 species including summer birds like narcissus flycatchers, blue and- white flycatchers, and common cuckoos. Over 1,000 species of insect have been confirmed in the area, which provides a stable habitat for much wildlife.

Regions higher than 1300 meters are filled with wind beaten low-lying vegetation like dwarf Japanese yews<sup>1</sup>, and feature a high mountain landscape shaped by extreme weather. This area is covered with many types of valuable alpine vegetation like mountain heather<sup>2</sup>, gaultheria<sup>3</sup>, geraniums<sup>4</sup> and veronicastrum<sup>5</sup>, which burst into beautiful flower arrays at the onset of summer.

While some natural beech forests remain in the upper regions of the Mt. Hiruzen area, most of the area is covered with secondary forests that were intentionally planted, but alpine vegetation like shortia shrubs and geraniums can still be found along the edge of the main path through the area. Autumn flowers like Chinese silver grass, scabiosa<sup>6</sup>, gentian root and great burnet blanket the foothills around Mt. Hiruzen.

The area around Mt. Kenashi features an abundance of valuable natural forest land mostly covered with beech, and the area is habitat for many birds of prey and other wildlife.

Around Mt. Mitoku, a series of natural forests covers the area with laurel forests like Japanese willowleaf oak<sup>7</sup> in the foothills, and cold weather deciduous broad-leaf trees like beech located in elevations between around 400 meters high and the edge of the mountain summit.

### Footnotes

- 1) Dwarf Japanese yews: *Taxus cuspidata* var. *nana*
- 2) Mountain heather: *Phyllodoce nipponica* Makino
- 3) Gaultheria: *Gaultheria ovaifolia* subsp. *adenothrix*
- 4) Geranium: *Geranium sikokianum* Matsum. var.
- 5) Veronicastrum: *Veronicastrum japonicum*
- 6) Scabiosa: *Scabiosa japonica*
- 7) Japanese willowleaf oak: *Quercus stenophylla*

## History

According to an ancient local historical record called the *Izumokuni-fudoki*, parts of the Oki archipelago and Noto peninsula were drawn together by threads pulled from an ancient spirit called *Yatsukami-izumitsunono-Mikoto* to form the Shimane peninsula. At the time, it is said that threads that pulled that lands formed Yumigahama peninsula, and that the *Okaminotake* crags of Shimane Prefecture formed a wedge that stopped the pulling. These *Okaminotake* crags form today's Mt. Daisen, which ever since has been revered as a holy mountain where Gods reside by the local people over the ages.

In the Heian era (794 - 1185 AD) the Daisen-ji Temple was built, as the *Yamagake* sect of Buddhism became very prevalent in the area. Continuing into the Kamakura era, Mt. Daisen became a preminent center of religious influence, boasting three temples, 180 monks and a community of 3000 worshippers.

In the ensuing period of Edo (1603 - 1868 AD), a 3000- stone temple court area was erected to protect Daisen-ji Temple, and the area became a major horse and cattle trading town in addition to place of a worship. Even today, Mt. Daisen roads from that era line the region that are still protected under the watchful gaze of the town Jizo statues that line the roadways.

Surrounding villages in the Daisenji Temple complex contain the remains of a rich collection of historical and cultural relics, like Daisen-ji Temple, Ogamiyama Shrine, Amidado Temple and other shrines and temples.

Together with Mt. Daisen and Mt. Senjo, many years ago Mt. Mitoku was known as *Hobki-Sanrei* ("three ridges of *Hobki*"). This holy place features national treasures like Nageiredo Temple and was an ancient place for *Shugendō* (Buddhist mystical-spiritual tradition) practitioners to engage in *Sangaku-shinko* mountain veneration.



Sanbutsuji Temple



Beech forests



Veronicastrum



Japanese yews

## Geography and Geology

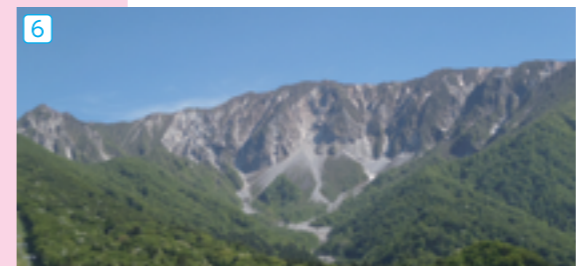
Mt. Hiruzen became volcanically active about 2 million years ago, and a lake formed when the current Mt. Hiruzen basin area got dammed up through geological activity. Around 1 million years ago, the Mt. Hiruzen and Mt. Daisen areas became extremely volcanically active, ejecting large volumes of molten rock and pyroclastic material into the surroundings. It is during this time that the mountains extending into the northeast were formed like Mt. Senjo, Mt. Kabutogasen and Mt. Yahazugasen, and were known as the *Koki-Daisen* ("ancient Daisen mountains").

A volcanic caldera formed in the center of the *Koki - Daisen*, and enormous volcanic emissions flowed outward to form the expansive open country that currently surrounds the mountains.

The last volcanic activity occurred around 20,000 years ago, when a glutinous mixture of molten dacite rock formations built up in the surrounding area creating many lava dome formations. These formations created the toroidal volcano that Mt. Daisen is today together with Mt. Misen, Mt. Kengamine, and Mt. Sankoho, which are known as the new Mt. Daisen range.

Towering predominantly over the Sea of Japan dividing the land like a room partition, Mt. Daisen is constantly exposed to the seasonal winds that blow through the region. Weather conditions on the mountain are harsh and the mountain is constantly eroding, contributing to the rough-hewn rocky surface at the top of the mountain today.

Mt. Mitoku is also an andesite toroidal mountain similar in geology to Mt. Daisen and Mt. Hiruzen.



North face of Mt. Daisen (Mt. Goen *Noroshi-Dai* Lookout)

## Other Facilities

### •Mt. Daisen Information Center

Providing visitors with information on the area's nature and outdoor attractions, as well as information on rest stops, tourist information booths and bus waiting areas.

Open: 8:00AM - 6:30PM  
(may be open longer in winter)  
Open all year. Free entry.



Mt. Daisen Information Center

### •Mt. Daisen Museum of Nature and History

Have fun while learning about Mt. Daisen's natural history and culture, surrounding area and wildlife.

Hours of operation: 9:00AM - 5:00PM  
(open till 6:30PM in summer)  
Closed: Yearend thru New Year's holiday.  
Free entry.



Mt. Daisen Museum of Nature and History

### •Mt. Senjo rest area

From May, 2013 the Mount Senjo rest area has been equipped with a resting space and separate men's and women's facilities.

Open: End of Apr thru Nov  
(closed in winter)



Mt. Senjo rest area

## Thanks for your cooperation

The National Park is habitat to many types of plants and wildlife, so please take caution not to remove, or engage in activity that may damage them.

According to Japan's National Park Law, permission from the Minister of Environment is required to remove plant and wildlife (including rocks and leaves from deciduous trees) from specially protected areas. Ministry permission is also required to cut down trees, and hunt or remove certain designated wildlife from certain areas. Violators are subject to up to six months in jail or penalties up to 500,000 Yen.

The following Mt. Daisen Environmental Proclamation was enacted on 1 June, 2013, and the members of the Mt Daisen Environmental Committee continues to serve in ways to protect, cherish and educate about the Mt Daisen area.

### Mt Daisen Environmental Proclamation

- 1 We shall respect Mt. Daisen's nature, history and culture, while protecting her abundant ecosystem.
- 2 We shall learn Mt. Daisen's nature, history and culture in order to enrich our minds.
- 3 We shall seek to understand Mt. Daisen's nature, history and culture, while cherishing her in our lives.

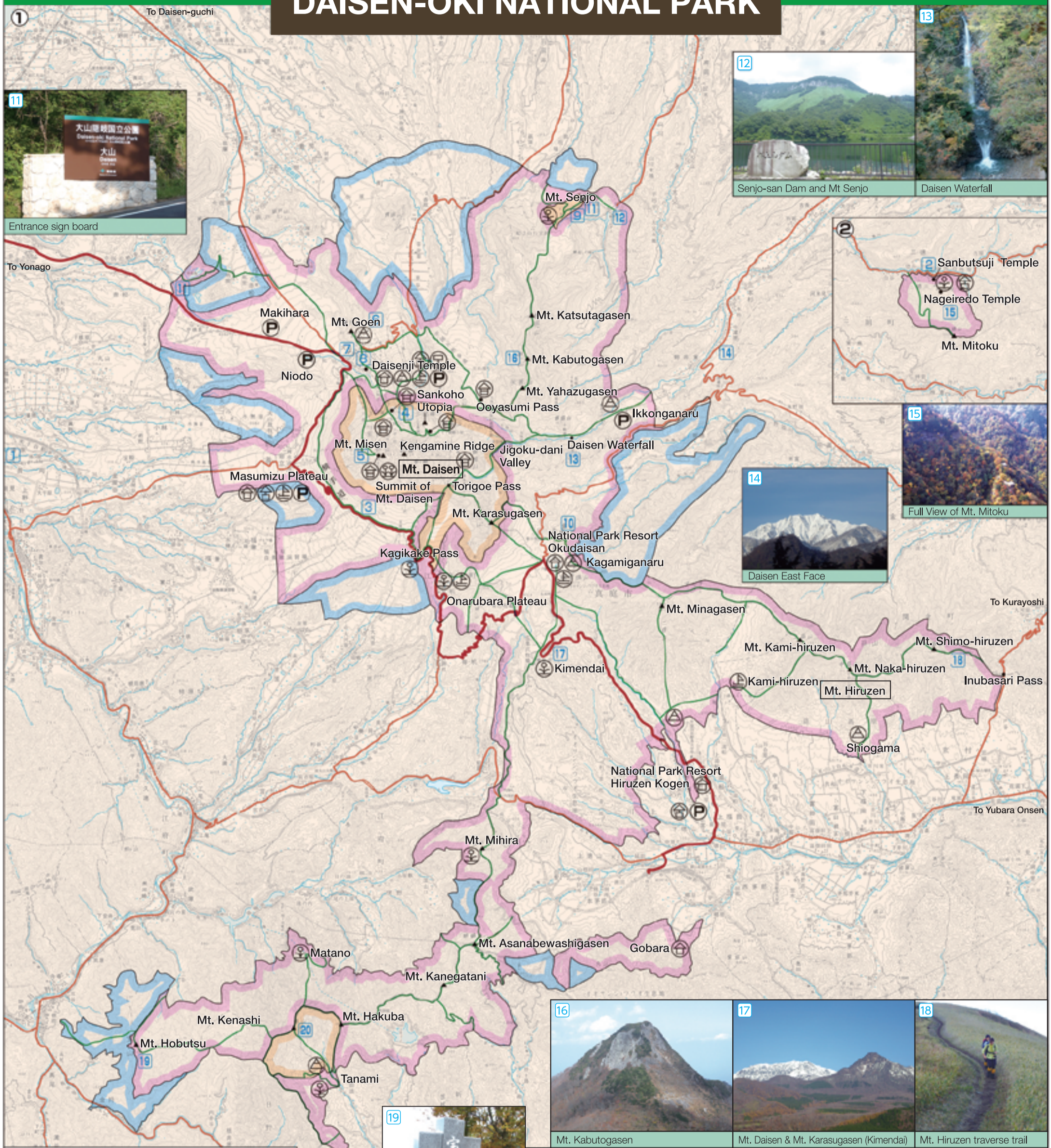


Preservation work at the summit of Mt. Daisen (laying ground coverings)

Natural Preservation Charter Monument (Kagamiganaru area)

## Notes

# DAISEN-OKI NATIONAL PARK



Legend	
Special protection Zone	Recreational ground
Special Zone	Lodging
Ordinary Zone	Rest stop
Daisen Parkway	Hut
Road	Camp site
Trail	Ski area
Parking	Visitor center
	Nature restoration
<b>Special Protection Zone</b> Especially exceptionally natural views or areas that have remained essentially undisturbed from their natural state. Such areas shall be strictly preserved.	
<b>Special Zone</b> In addition to activities for protected areas, Ministry of Environment permission is required to take away any plant material (including fallen leaves or branches), or to remove any animals (including animal eggs).	
<b>Ordinary Zone</b> Areas deemed important for using the park that feature exceptional natural beauty or have particularly noteworthy cultural value. In such areas, it is important to strike a balance between development and natural preservation.	
Areas other than specially protected areas, special areas, or ocean park areas. Please contact the numbers listed under park contact details for further information on these regulations.	

