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Niseko summer special

A treasure trove of outdoor thrills

Located in Hokkaido, Niseko is 50 kilometers southwest of Japan's fifth-largest city, Sapporo, and 80 kilometers west of the international New Chitose Airport in Hokkaido. Although located in Japan's northernmost island, Niseko is easily accessible.

Set against the backdrop of Mount Yotei, a dormant volcano also known as Ezo Fuji for its similarities to Mount Fuji, and next to one of the most beautiful rivers in Japan, the Shiribetsu River, the Niseko region is a feast for the eyes. The stunning landscape is well-positioned to offer a variety of exciting seasonal attractions that can be enjoyed by visitors of all ages.

In the summer, visitors are drawn to the comfortable temperatures, serene country atmosphere, farm-fresh produce and a wide variety of activities ranging from golf and skiing to rafting, biking and climbing. In the winter, the Champagne powder snow and pristine ski slopes attract skiers and snowboarders from all over the world.

Cycling in Niseko

Niseko is a cycling paradise, with beautiful nature and animals, comfortable weather, wide and safe roads, fresh Hokkaido food and onsen hot springs. From hardened athletes to those who simply want to meander around on a bike, cyclists from all over are discovering Niseko.

In addition to being selected repeatedly as the stage for Japan's largest race, the Tour de Hokkaido, several local races and events are also held in Niseko. From June through August, there are four cycling events: the Nature Ride on June 10, the Niseko Classic on July 7 and 8, the Strider Enjoy Cup on

July 15 and the Hanazono Hill Climb on Aug. 5. Bike rentals are readily available to those on vacation, and all types and models are offered, mirroring winter ski and snowboard options. From road bikes to full-suspension mountain bikes, guests can enjoy cycling however they like. Moreover, The Niseko Green Bike program provides free-to-use bicycles at six locations throughout the town of Niseko, such as Kiranoyu Onsen just across from Niseko Station. Using the Fureai shuttle bus from Niseko Station, visitors can hitch a ride uphill with a bike for just ¥100 and cycle worry-free.

For more information on cycling events, access www.nisekotourism.com/whats-on/event/2018-niseko-cycle-summer-events.

Golf, rafting and hiking

The Niseko area boasts a large number and variety of golf courses. The season runs from late April until early November, and the summer is an especially popular time. There are courses for everyone, from children to the elderly.

Additionally, paddling down the Shiribetsu River, one of Japan's clearest rivers, in a small rubber raft is the most popular summer activity in Niseko, with many people coming back to experience the thrill time after time.

When it comes to hiking, from rambling around on footpaths through Shinsennuma marsh in the upper moors to a full-scale expedition of the Niseko mountain range or a Mount Yotei climb, there are hikes and walks to match everyone's strengths and desires. Guides are there to show visitors nature's best-kept secrets or lead them on a dynamic trail run.

Niseko Autumn Food Festival

Niseko is becoming a culinary destination today and quite a few Michelin-starred restaurants are located there, and there is more to look forward to during the autumn harvest time. Taking place at the same time as the Sapporo Autumn Fest, the first Niseko Autumn Food Festival 2018 will be held from Sept. 13 to 16 at Hirafuzaka, featuring local seasonal foods from the area. It is the first eco-focused event supporting the local community's commitment to reduce waste. All restaurants and bars participating in the event will not be using plastic utensils or cups.

For more information on the festival, visit nisekotourism.com/2018NisekoAutumnFes.

The official Niseko app

To get the most out of a visit to Niseko, the 2017-18 official Niseko app has been released and is now available in the Apple app store and the Google Play store. This unique resort-recognized app provides visitors with integrated resort information on the latest Niseko United lift service updates, avalanches and restaurants or activity information that are listed by area and category.

Equipped with GPS functions, the app allows visitors to track the Niseko United Shuttle location, use the Taxi Caller app, as well as view detailed transportation information. Topics covered include day tours to other resorts or scenic spots close by, such as Kiroro, Rusutsu, Otaru and Hakodate. Visitors can also access the E-Guides section where they can find the 50th edition of Powderlife Magazine that is available in English, Chinese and Japanese. For the summer app, access www.nisekotourism.com/media/2018-niseko-app-summer-version.



How to get to Niseko

Niseko can be reached easily from New Chitose Airport — a short flight from major international airports. To New Chitose Airport, it takes around one hour and 35 to 45 minutes from Narita Airport, approximately one hour and 50 minutes from Kansai International Airport in Osaka and, on average, one hour and 42 minutes from Chubu Centrair International Airport.

Niseko can be reached by train from New Chitose Airport via Otaru, or by train or shuttle bus from Hakodate (for the shuttle bus schedule, access www.nisekotourism.com/news/entry/demonstration-bus-operation-service). Please be sure to get off at Kutchan or Niseko stations where most accommodation providers will arrange for guests to be picked up. Alternatively, visitors can take a taxi from the station (approximately 10 minutes and ¥1,500) to Niseko-Hirafu.



Visitors can enjoy scenic nature while rafting down the Shiribetsu River, one of Japan's clearest rivers (top), or riding on a ducky (above), a small raft designed for one or two people. NISEKO PROMOTION BOARD

This article is an edited excerpt from the "Niseko Tourism" website.



Above: Mountain bikers cycle against a backdrop of Mount Yotei and beautiful nature. Above right: The Strider Enjoy Cup will be held on July 15 for children aged two to six who enjoy riding bikes. Right: The Niseko Village Golf Course is one of many golf courses in the area that offers an opportunity for everyone to take part in the sport. NISEKO PROMOTION BOARD



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