

Niseko Summer special

(Sponsored content)

‘Aspen of Asia’ home to a wealth of summer activities

Mention “Niseko” and most people familiar with Japan will attest to its white wintry wilderness and abundant powder snow. Though most famed for its glamorous ski season, this mountain resort town has a secret: It is equally beautiful, if not more so, during summer.

Warm, breezy days transform into crisp, brisk nights. The snowy slopes of Mount Yotei, said to resemble a mini Mount Fuji, are replaced with undulating fields of green. Wildlife sightings make the heart feel alive again and unspoiled nature soothes the soul.

Niseko lies approximately 50 kilometers southwest of the Hokkaido capital of Sapporo, and is 80 kilometers west of New Chitose Airport. Flights connecting Tokyo and Osaka are mere hours away, with shinkansen journeys from Tokyo to nearby Hakodate taking about four hours. International flights to Asia also abound.

Nicknamed the “Aspen of Asia,” such is Niseko’s popularity — it is said that people come for the winter but end up staying for the summer — that the summer events calendar for this famed ski resort town has seen exponential growth. Activities shift from snow sports to mountain biking, cycling tours and tournaments, hiking and trekking once the weather warms up.

Others include paddle boarding, rafting, ziplines, family-friendly camps and lazy rides on summer gondolas to the top of beautiful Mount Yotei and Mount Annupuri. Sweeping views of Niseko and beyond greet those who make the ascent up the Grand Hirafu Summer Gondola (open from mid-July), as does the reward of reclining on a sofa bed at the top.

Joyriding with the pros

Conditions in Niseko are ideal for cycling. Its roads are seemingly endless, but have

enough variation to hold rider interest. The area’s temperate climate and relative lack of humidity is also a bonus for those engaging in the sport.

The Niseko Yotei Circuit Fun Ride is an annual event designed to bring the enjoyment back into cycling. Featuring courses ranging from 56 to 175 kilometers, participants circumnavigate Mount Yotei at their own pace and experience some of the best scenery Niseko has to offer. With emphasis on the “fun,” the course has been devised with the input of racing professional Masatoshi Ichikawa. The 2019 event takes place on July 7, with a follow-up event on July 8, the Onsen Panorama Ride, touring hot springs found in the areas around Rankoshi and Niseko.

Riders with a more competitive bent are advised to take note of the 2019 Niseko Classic (July 6 to 7). Open to riders over the age of 16 and this year expected to attract around 1,500 riders from all over the world, the 70 and 140-kilometer races are official UCI Gran Fondo World Series qualifier events supervised by the Japan Cycling Federation. Both races finish at the Niseko Hirafu Resort and there are prizes for all age categories.

The Niseko Classic Festival is held on the same weekend at the race’s main venue, with various food stands and fun attractions

for children.

Held a week later on July 14 at Niseko Grand Hirafu, the 2019 Strider Enjoy Cup is a race designed especially for junior riders aged up to 6 years old.

Water thrills and spills

The Niseko region is one of the top areas for canoeing, paddle boarding, rafting and kayaking in Hokkaido. An incredible variety of white-water experiences — from first-timer mild, to thrill-seeker wild — is available. Niseko’s Shiribetsu River offers plenty of opportunities for beginners and advanced rafters to explore her 126-kilometer waters. One of Japan’s most pristine rivers, enthusiasts can traverse the waterway while taking in some of Hokkaido’s most spectacular scenery.

Par for the course

Golf is one of Niseko’s most popular non-snow activities. The season runs roughly from April to October, with the number of golfers escaping the humidity of southern Japan and Asian countries increasing each year. Hokkaido’s temperate climate is also said to be ideal for cultivating the lush golf grounds. While golfers are spoiled for choice and can choose from nine golf courses located within 45 minutes of Hirafu in central Niseko, three central options are proving popular among enthusiasts.

The resort-like Niseko Village Golf Course is a par-73, 6,845-yard course that is said to be suitable for all golfers, while the Arnold Palmer designed par-72, 6,805-yard Niseko Golf Course is a short drive from Niseko Village. The Hanazono Golf Course features an 18-hole par-72 course, along with an array of water features and stunning vistas of Mount Yotei and the surrounding Annupuri mountain range.

Walking wonderland

From mellow paths to woodland trails to hiking paths up the Niseko mountains that outdoor types love to ski down in the win-



Niseko’s temperate climate during the summer is ideal for cycling, and cyclists can take part in several events held in the area. NISEKO TOURISM



Left: Niseko is known for its canoeing, paddle boarding, rafting and kayaking experiences. NISEKO TOURISM



Above: Niseko has many golf courses with stunning views of the surrounding mountains. NISEKO TOURISM

ter months — Niseko has treks and trails for all. The views from the top of Mount Annupuri are nothing short of spectacular. Standing at approximately 1,898 meters above sea level, the steeper Mount Yotei is definitely a challenge for more adventurous types. The circuit track around Lake Hangetsu, which sits at the foot of the mountain is a simpler alternative and makes for a relatively easier yet still scenic hike.

Festive fun

Early August sees downtown Niseko revel in *matsuri*, or festival activities, her streets

crowded with participants for two of the area’s most popular events. The Kutchan potato festival or *jaga matsuri* celebrates the area’s most iconic vegetable. Said to attract around 40,000 visitors, a highlight of the event is a massive dance featuring 1,000 people.

Also popular is Niseko’s annual fireworks festival. Held at the Niseko Town Athletic Park, this year the event is slated to take place on Aug. 3. Fireworks are a summer tradition in Japan, and at Niseko the dazzling colors illuminate the skies, providing spectators with a magnificent display.

Fun-filled seasonal excursion awaits

Niseko may mean winter and perfect powder snow to most, but the months in the lead-up to ski season are no less packed with things to do.

This is especially true for families hoping to escape Tokyo’s relentless summer heat: Fun-filled family adventures at EdVenture summer camps, courtesy of MNK Niseko; the 2019 Strider Enjoy Cup; and the 2019 Niko Niko Niseko Village Festival — these latter two events both held on July 14 — all await.

The 2019 Strider Enjoy Cup may well be the world’s cutest bike race yet. Kids aged 6 and under ride Strider balance bikes to compete in a fun yet action-packed race across a verdant plain with Mount Yotei in the distance.

Now in its fifth year, the 2019 Niko Niko Niseko Village Festival, meanwhile, is more low-key, inviting food, music and art lovers to join in celebratory fun. The event includes live music, food stalls, fun crafts and games for kids, and fireworks, all between the hours of 3 to 8:30 p.m.

Those interested in gastronomic tourism need not despair; the eco-friendly 2019 Niseko Autumn Food Festival is a

four-day event (Sept. 12 to 15) co-hosted by the Niseko Promotion Board and the G20 summit showcasing Niseko’s fall harvest. A delicious celebration of regional wares, the festival coincides with the Sapporo Autumn Food Festival, and a free shuttle bus runs between the two events.

Niseko’s most popular restaurants are participating. Local accommodations are offering discounted plans, so visitors can stay and not only explore Niseko’s thriving food and drink scene, but also the region.

URL: <http://www.nisekotourism.com/whats-on/>



Above and left: The eco-friendly Niseko Autumn Food Festival showcases Niseko’s fall harvest from Sept. 12 to 15. NISEKO TOURISM



NIKO NIKO NISEKO VILLAGE FESTIVAL

フード&ミュージック&アートのニセコ夏祭り vol.5

無料 有料

2019 7.14 sun 15:00~20:30

ニセコビレッジ「ショッピング&ダイニングエリア」

Strider Enjoy Cup

The OFFICIAL Strider Japan Race

JULY 14 2019

stridernisekoproject.com

striderniseko stridernisekoproject

Location : Niseko Grand Hirafu

Race Categories : Four categories

Two-year-olds, three-year-olds, four-year-olds, five-to-six-year-olds

Registration : May 15-June 22

Fee : May 15-June 22

Contact : Strider Enjoy Cup Office

Tel : 03-8435-4374

Office Hours: 10:00-17:00, Monday-Friday except national holidays

Email: strider-enjoycup@runandbike.jp

DISCOVER A DELIGHTFUL SUMMER ESCAPE IN HOKKAIDO WITH CHALET IVY, LOCATED IN THE TWO NATURAL WONDERLANDS OF JOZANKEI AND NISEKO

Chalet Ivy Hirafu is a cozy boutique hotel situated in the heart of Hirafu with the astonishing backdrop of Mount Yotei.

Chalet Ivy HIRAFU

EXCLUSIVE GRAND OPENING AUGUST 2019

Jozankei, Hokkaido

ASIA'S PREMIER SEASONAL RESORT

Niseko, Hokkaido

Chalet Ivy JOZANKEI

Chalet Ivy Jozankei, a ryokan fused with tradition and modernity, is located amongst rich natural forest and mountain streams.

CHALETIVY.COM

HIRAFU: 0136 22 1124

JOZANKEI: 011 595 2888

RESERVATIONS@CHALETIVY.COM

RESERVATIONS.JZK@CHALETIVY.COM

Niseko Summer special

(Sponsored content)

Luxury fused with outdoor fun

Situated near the foothills of, and boasting panoramic views of Mount Yotei — Hokkaido's "Mount Fuji" — the luxuriously appointed Chalet Ivy in central Hirafu is Niseko's premier four-star boutique hotel offering comfortable Western-style accommodations.

Central to the Chalet Ivy experience is the hotel staff's warm hospitality. The staff provides Japanese-level customer service, or *omotenashi*, where guest needs are anticipated in advance; a stay at Chalet Ivy is one guests won't soon forget.

Rooms embody the best of Western design, yet also display a contemporary elegance. Of special note are Chalet Ivy's deluxe *onsen* (hot spring) suites, spacious 57-square meter accommodations that sleep up to four adults comfortably.

The suites offer the latest in upscale bedding, classic furnishings, stylish and functional kitchens with all the appliances and cookware needed, ample storage, a flat-screen and Apple-connected TV, Wi-Fi as well as dining and lounge areas suitable for both entertaining or relaxing after a long day exploring Niseko and its famous slopes. Balconies provide stellar views of the Hirafu mountain range area and beyond.

The suites' private *onsen* are particularly enticing. Mineral-rich waters are drawn from 300 meters of earth and prehistoric rock layers underground. Containing sodium, magnesium-hydrogen carbonate, hydrosulfate and chloride, these waters are renowned for their healing properties. Unwind and take



The boutique hotel Chalet Ivy is located in central Hirafu near Mount Yotei and offers comfortable Western-style accommodations. CHALET IVY

a rejuvenating soak in the privacy of one's own deluxe *onsen* suite and continue the pampering with a massage at the hotel's spa. Guests can also keep up with their fitness regimen at Chalet Ivy's gymnasium.

Niseko's popularity is built on the back of its reputation for powder snow and as a winter sports hub, but guests escaping the sticky humid summers found elsewhere in Japan and the Asian region will be pleasantly surprised by the area's temperate climate. Mount Yotei, the Shiribetsu River and nearly a dozen world-class golf courses are nearby. Road cycling, mountain biking, white-water rafting, kayaking, hiking, *shinrin-yoku* (forest therapy), fly-fishing and visiting the organic Niseko Green Farm, are just a few of the

activities on offer that make for great family bonding time, with Chalet Ivy staff ready to assist with activity details and making reservations.

Fine summer dining to satisfy hungry guests after a day outdoors is served at Chalet Ivy's Snow Castle restaurant, home to modern Japanese cuisine. Using the best of Hokkaido's seasonal produce — fresh seafood, sun-kissed fruits and vegetables and local meats — standard flavors and techniques are combined with more inventive dishes to create a premium menu that delights and inspires the senses. More casual, but no less delicious fare can be found at Chalet Ivy's HirafuZaka eatery, open for lunch and dinner seven days a week.

Niseko and Chalet Ivy are within easy access from New Chitose International Airport as well as Sapporo and Otaru. Hotel staff can help arrange private transportation to and from the airport, while year-round train and bus options are also available.

Such is the success of Chalet Ivy that company owners are now developing Japanese-style *ryokan* inn lodgings in Jozankei, near Sapporo. Located by the banks of the Toyohira River, this property will combine western and Japanese aesthetics and is slated to open in late 2019.



Left: The hotel's Snow Castle restaurant serves modern Japanese cuisine using the best of Hokkaido's seasonal ingredients. Right: Suites are stylishly decorated, and guests can enjoy an awe-inspiring view of Mount Yotei from the windows and balconies. CHALET IVY



Outdoor activities for youths, families

EdVenture summer camp is a multi-activity outdoors camp for children and teens between 3 and 16 years of age. Spending days and nights in the natural surrounds of Niseko, participants and their families come together to explore just how big — and small — the world really is.

Through the adventure of exploring a new environment, connecting with people from other cultures, gaining confidence in nature and learning new skills, campers will discover their full potential. Children gain the courage to follow their future dreams, wherever they may lead.

EdVenture summer camps operate a little differently from regular camps as families are also invited to experience Niseko's rustic expanse. Camp types differ in the amount

of independence offered. Younger children may spend half-days alone before immersing themselves in typical overnight camping experiences later in the week, while older campers are offered a complete parent-free experience.

City dwellers have much to gain. Fun, hands-on activities range from picking cherries to mountain trail hiking, as well as woodwork activities to kayaking on the waters of Lake Toya. Camp activities take place near Mount Annupuri and Mount Yotei, where lush forests, crystal clear lakes,

freshwater springs and mountain trails abound.

The summer camp experience is long renowned as advantageous for children's growth. It fosters all-around resilience, bolsters empowerment and independence, while also encouraging physical and mental exercise through play. Join in the fun at an EdVenture summer camp, where camp organizers say the outdoors becomes "a child's inspiration and laboratory."

URL: <https://www.edventureniseko.com>



Far left and left: EdVenture summer camp in Niseko is a multi-activity outdoors summer camp for children and teens, as well as for their families. MNK RESORTS AND HOSPITALITY



Niseko Kids Camp

Spots Selling Fast!

Final remaining dates:

- > July 1-5
- > July 8-12
- > July 15-19
- > July 22-26
- > July 29 - August 2
- > August 5-9

Exclusive Japan Times Offer

Book your Niseko accommodation and kids camp experience together to receive:

- > 15% off your accommodation and
- > 5% off EdVenture kids camp

* Terms and conditions apply

Total package from
¥11,262 pp for a family of four

To redeem, simply mention: "JAPANTIMES19"



Scan
For More
Information