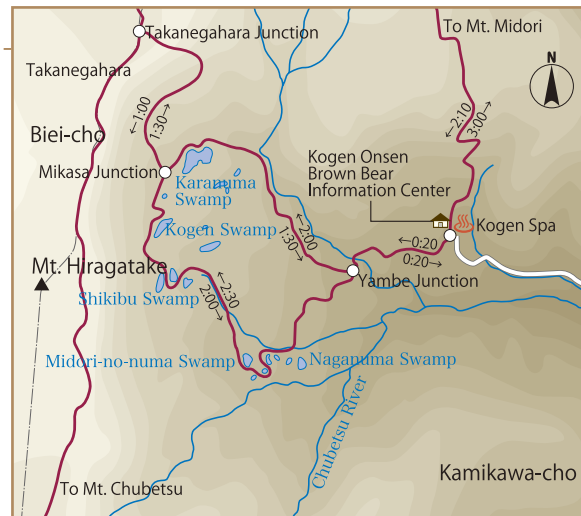


Kogen Hot Spring and Swamp Tour

There are numerous small lakes and swamps in the forests extending below Takanegahara. A tour of the swamps starting at Kogen Hot Spring is a highly popular trekking route especially during the fall when the leaves are changing color. There is a restriction on private cars during this season, so you should check on the road conditions before you go. The bus runs from Souunkyo Gorge to Kogen Hot Spring. Before your departure, make sure to attend an orientation lecture at the Brown Bear Information Center located at the entry point of the walkway. Walkways may be closed when the likelihood of encountering brown bears is high.



Hikers at Kogen Hot Spring



Autumn Leaves that Color the Entire Mountain

The leaves change color early in Daisetsuzan, beginning with the alpine zone around mid-September. Tiny plants such as Urashima Azaleas (*Rhododendron tsutsuji*) and Aleutian Avens (*Sieversia pentapetala*) become burning red. The color change descends quickly and eventually enters the forest zone, where trees such as Japanese Rowans (*Sorbus commixta*), Erman's Birch (*Betula ermani*), Miyabe's Maple (*Acer miyabei*), and the Japanese Judas (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) turn red, orange, and yellow, adorning the entire mountain with a bright brocade. This sumptuous bouquet of colors occurs just before the snow covers everything. The autumn colors around Kogen Hot Spring are particularly vivid.

Autumn descends quickly in Daisetsuzan



Mount Tomuraushi Area

The area between Takanegahara and Mount Tomuraushi, located to the south of the central vent of the volcanoes in Daisetsuzan, is known as Kamuimintara—The Playground of the Gods. This celestial world includes a grand plateau, flower gardens extending as far as the eye can see, and periglacial landforms at various spots, among other things.

This area requires at least an overnight trip. Visitors may either sleep in the shelters, or bring their own tents. In the Daisetsuzan region, encompassing the Tokachi Mountain Range and others, there are no well-equipped mountain huts like those in the Japanese Alps. There is a manager during the summer at Kurodake Ishimuro and the Mount Hakuun shelter. However, the evacuation huts at other locations such as Mount Chubetsu and Hisago Swamp are unmanned. Moreover, camping is prohibited at locations other than those designated, so you should plan your mountaineering trip carefully after obtaining the latest information from local visitor centers. The major routes are not difficult during periods without snow, but they are long, and better suited for experienced climbers.



From Numanohara to Mount Tomuraushi



Mountain trails at Mount Tomuraushi



Flower garden at Mount Ponkaun

Column

Glacial Remnants in Hokkaido

The cirques (shallow semi-circular valleys created by small-scale glaciers) in the Hidaka Mountain Range situated to the south of Daisetsuzan are well known glacial structures in Hokkaido. There are various cirque-like geographical features present in Daisetsuzan, which is at a higher elevation than the Hidaka Mountain Range. Although there are accumulations of materials resembling moraines (unconsolidated glacial debris), there is debate over whether they are actually cirques, and not all researchers agree. This is because the volcanic activity in Daisetsuzan which created the present mountains, is thought to have continued into a warmer period after the last glacial period, when many of the glaciers developed. In addition, explosive vents are also known to form structures similar to cirques.