

Niseko winter special

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Visitors invited to experience winter sports mecca

When it comes to winter sports, one would be hard pressed to find a resort area more impressive than Niseko in Hokkaido. Renowned for its high-quality powder and varied runs, Niseko has become an international mecca for winter sports enthusiasts who flock to its resorts every year to get their fill of Japan's best snow.

Located in the southwest of Hokkaido, Niseko is 50 kilometers away from the prefecture's capital, Sapporo. From Sapporo, travelers can reach Niseko's resorts by taking a two-hour train ride to Kutchan Station, where most accommodation providers will pick up travelers and take them to their respective destinations. Alternatively, travelers can also take taxis, or buses, depending on the season, to reach their accommodations from the station. Those traveling to Hokkaido by air can reach Kutchan Station by train from New Chitose Airport, with a one-way journey taking approximately 2.5 hours.

A winter resort paradise

The resorts around the Niseko mountain range comprise a winter wonderland for skiers and boarders. The mountain's most notable resorts, Annupuri, Grand Hirafu, Hanazono and Niseko Village, each features their own distinct contributions. Located at the base of a large national park, Annupuri has some of Hokkaido's best snow, while Niseko Village offers a wide variety of skiing options and Grand Hirafu has a diverse selection of accommodations.

This winter, one resort area in particular will enhance its hospitality with exciting new offerings. Hanazono is known for its amazing powder snow and is surrounded by acres of some of the country's deepest snowfall. From December, the resort will undergo a transformation that will turn it into Asia's premier international ski and resort destination.

At the heart of this transformation is the new Park Hyatt Niseko, Hanazono, that is slated to open on Jan. 20. Overlooking Niseko's base and beginner slopes, these ski-in ski-out accommodations will form the new centerpiece of Hanazono and feature extensive retail and dining options.

The Park Hyatt's establishment will coincide with the opening of Hanazono Edge, a



Located in the southwest of Hokkaido, Niseko boasts variety of runs suited to skiers and boarders of all abilities. NISEKO TOURISM

new two-story ski center with a slope-side restaurant, cafe and bar. Hanazono will also open its new activity center for children. Galaxy of Kidz, replete with climbing walls, a net playground, and other exciting playgrounds, in addition to a restaurant catering to children.

Unparalleled variety of runs

At the heart of Niseko's appeal is its enormous variety of runs for skiers and snowboarders. From wide-open courses to tree runs, backcountry, off-piste, first track and night-skiing courses, Niseko has it all. The mountain's 71 courses are covered by an extensive lift system with gondolas and covered chairlifts that meet at the summit, from where riders can easily access Niseko's resorts.

Niseko's runs are suited to skiers and boarders of all abilities. Whether a beginner looking to learn the ropes, an intermediate rider hoping to improve their skills or a thrill-seeking veteran, Niseko offers riding terrain and courses for all. These varied runs and terrific, abundant powder have launched Niseko into international

stardom among the world's skiers and snowboarders.

Unique activities off the slopes

Niseko is indeed a wonderland for skiers and snowboarders, but its offerings also include unique activities for visitors to experience the mountain area's pristine snow off the slopes.

Those wanting to rest their legs from a long day of skiing and snowboarding can experience varied courses on a snowmobile, enjoying scenic rides through forests or adventurous rides through deep powder and steep terrain.

Another popular winter activity is snow rafting and snow tubing, in which visitors sit in a rubber raft and are towed by a snowmobile. With both fast runs and gentle tows, these activities are perfect for families and thrill seekers alike.

For a pleasant outing away from the slopes, people need look no further than snowshoeing. Visitors can strap on beginner-friendly snowshoes and explore Hokkaido's scenic countryside, appreciating the region's abundant native flora and fauna, quiet back-



The Niseko ski resort area is renowned for its high-quality powder snow and premium trails. NISEKO TOURISM

waters and ice-covered lakes along the way.

Though not a winter sport, rugby will have a strong presence this year in Niseko. To celebrate the 2019 Rugby World Cup taking place in Japan through Nov. 2, select restaurants and bars will coordinate rugby viewing parties and events for visitors to get in on the sporting action. For further information, see <http://www.nisekotourism.com/whats-on/event/2019rugby>.

Premium rest and relaxation

For many Japanese, no winter outing is complete without some rest and relaxation

at an *onsen* (hot spring). Niseko does not disappoint in this regard. From luxurious hotels to casual day spas, the Niseko area is filled with various *onsen* facilities whose soothing mineral-rich waters will leave visitors' revived after long activity-filled days. For an intimate *onsen* experience with nature, guests can soak in *rotenburo* (open air baths), where they can take in the region's beautiful sights and sounds from the comforts of Niseko's refreshing hot springs.

A major attraction of Hokkaido is its cuisine, characterized by fresh vegetables

and seafood from the prefecture's fertile land and vast seas. Thankfully, Niseko has numerous bars and restaurants where visitors can relish in local flavor. In addition to authentic Japanese dishes prepared with locally grown produce, Niseko's establishments serve a variety of dishes, including hamburgers and ramen, as well as favorites such as rice balls and *okonomiyaki* (savory pancakes). Combined with the culinary skills of local chefs, Niseko's dining options and the use of fresh produce will delight the palates of winter travelers.



Far left: Visitors can experience a variety of dishes such as ramen. Left: Niseko is the perfect place to enjoy snow activities such as riding snowmobiles. NISEKO TOURISM



High-end mountainside hospitality

Although Niseko — Japan's top snow resort area — offers various luxury accommodations, there's no beating premier boutique hotel Chalet Ivy.

Chalet Ivy's spacious Western-style accommodations represent the pinnacle of Japanese hospitality. All rooms boast luxury amenities, including complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi, as well as balconies with pleasant views of surrounding courtyards, mountain ranges and villages. The suites, which boast spacious dining and lounge areas, feature elegant design and classic furnishings, as well as functional kitchens equipped with appliances and cookware.

All overnight guests have access to the hotel's shared *onsen* (hot spring) on the first floor. Drawn from a depth of 300 meters, the soothing mineral-rich water of Chalet Ivy's hot spring is among the best in Niseko. Known to relieve fatigue and pain as well as relax the mind, these waters will leave guests feeling revitalized after a long day on the slopes. True *onsen* enthusiasts should

consider the hotel's deluxe *onsen* suites, featuring private baths ideal for those who prefer a more secluded soak in the hotel's revitalizing waters. Alternatively, guests can use the hotel's separate private *onsen*, available upon reservation.

Representing the hotel's ultimate luxury offering is the penthouse. The spacious 223-square-meter accommodation has four rooms as well as a private *rotenburo* (outdoor bath) and sun deck, where breathtaking views of Mount Yotei — oftentimes referred to as the "Mount Fuji" of Hokkaido — will leave guests in awe.

Given Niseko's reputation as a mecca for winter sports, it's no surprise Chalet Ivy provides several services for skiers and snowboarders. At the hotel's Ski Concierge, guests can rent quality ski and snowboard equipment at reasonable prices, while booking for private ski and snowboarding lessons — ranging from two to six hours in length — in addition to other winter activities, is available at the Winter Activity Counter.

Chalet Ivy's dining options include a delectable range of dishes that capture the flavors of Hokkaido. Restaurant Snow Castle specializes in exquisite Japanese cuisine prepared with Hokkaido's finest seasonal ingredients and eatery HirafuZaka offers casual dishes such as ramen and *udon* (thick wheat noodles), rice bowls and an array of irresistible appetizers. The warm ambiance of the hotel's bar and lounge, *Après*, is the perfect setting to unwind after a long day of winter activities. Guests are encouraged to relax in front of the lounge's real log fireplace and enjoy a glass of Chalet Ivy's signature cocktail Massan Log Fire.

Situated in central Hirafu, Chalet Ivy is easily accessible from New Chitose Airport and Sapporo. Visitors can reach the resort from Kutchan Station, which can be accessed from New Chitose Airport and Sapporo by train. Once at Kutchan Station, guests can use the hotel's Kutchan shuttle bus, which runs from Dec. 1 to March 31, or take a taxi to the hotel. In the spirit of Japanese hospitality, Chalet Ivy assists in booking private transportation between the hotel and New Chitose Airport and Sapporo.



Chalet Ivy's luxurious penthouse offers a panoramic view of the iconic Mount Yotei as well as an outdoor hot spring. CHALET IVY



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Chalet Ivy

HIRAFU
JOZANKEI

NISEKO RESORT & JOZANKEI ONSEN

ASIA'S PREMIER WINTER RESORT

Chalet Ivy Hirafu is a cozy boutique hotel situated in the heart of Hirafu with astonishing panoramic views of the ski area and iconic Mount Yotei.

- 78 spacious guest rooms and suites
- Fully equipped gym and relaxation spa
- Natural mineral-rich hot springs
- Two delectable restaurants and an *Après* Lounge
- Airport transfers, Ski Concierge and ski rental

GRAND OPENING SEPTEMBER 2019

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

Featuring 26 spacious and luxurious suites with private mineral rich *onsen* in every room.

Introducing ZUI, inhouse fine dining, offering exquisite seasonal Japanese cuisine

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