

# NO BUSINESS LIKE SNOW BUSINESS

*Niigata is a winter destination that has it all*



● Niigata  
● Tokyo



## SAKE

Where there's good rice and good water, there's good sake. That's Niigata, in case you were wondering. For anyone who's not been to a sake festival, it involves taking your *ochokko* or small cup around and trying an unlimited quantity of the finest *jizake* (local sake). There will be 500 varieties provided by 90 brewers, plus a selection of local delicacies to soak up the liquid. The festival takes place March 17-18, from 10am-6pm, and your ticket (¥1,800 adv; ¥2,000 door) will gain you access for both days—if you can handle it. **Toki Messe Niigata Convention Center, 6-1 Bandaijima, Chuo-ku, Niigata City. Tel: 025-229-1218. Nearest stn: Niigata, Bandai exit (20 min walk). <http://meturi.com/niigatasake>**

## 1 NAEBA SKI RESORT

Another word that often goes with "ski" and "Japan" is "Naeba." Japan's largest ski resort can provide you with stimulating ski and board possibilities for days, plus the world's longest gondola, The Dragondola, which travels a whopping 5.5km from Naeba's slopes to Kagura Ski Resort's Tashiro area, providing entry to the rest of Kagura's runs. When staying in Naeba, you'd be hard pushed to find a better alternative than the 3,000-room Naeba Prince Hotel. The hotel provides easy access to and from the slopes—with lifts in operation 13 hours a day Sunday to Friday, and 14 hours on Saturday. Naturally there are plenty of recreational possibilities après-ski, too. **202 Mikuni, Yuzawa Town. Tel: 025-789-2211. [www.princehotels.co.jp/ski/naeba-e](http://www.princehotels.co.jp/ski/naeba-e)**



2

## 2 GALA YUZAWA

Imagine waking up one morning in Tokyo, and sliding down a glorious ski slope by 8am. Sounds crazy—but it's totally possible with Gala Yuzawa. Situated in Echigo Yuzawa, a town with the dual qualities of copious amounts of snowfall and a shinkansen stop 77 minutes from Tokyo station, the resort is your gateway to skiing in Niigata. You can slalom from 1,181m all the way down to 358m, with all kinds of possibilities for all levels. Last season they opened up their new 2.5km run, which you can ski or board down 573m, with fabulous views of the Uonuma valley to the north as you go. **1039-2 Kayadaira Yuzawa Town. Tel: 025-785-6543. [www.galaresort.jp/winter/english](http://www.galaresort.jp/winter/english)**



3



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## 3 AKAKURA

Founded in 1937 as one of the first European-style ski lodges in Japan, the Akakura Onsen Ski Resort is played out majestically on the slopes of Mt. Myoko. The hotel contains 52 western- and Japanese-style rooms offering spectacular views of the surrounding mountains and glittering Lake Nojiri to the east. Akakura offers a 4km run from 1,500m, plus snowboarding, terrain parks and plenty for all ability levels. Nearby Nagano provides some sightseeing and entertainment possibilities, with biking, hiking and climbing on offer, too. The hotel was recently done up to preserve its antique style updated with all the modern conveniences. **216 Tagiri, Myoko-shi. Tel: 025-587-2503. [www.akr-ski.com/english](http://www.akr-ski.com/english)**

## 4 CUPID VALLEY

The origin of skiing in Japan is said to be in Joetsu City. And right there, at the source, is an intimate resort named Cupid Valley, where you can start your love affair with the slopes. The intimate resort might only have five ski lifts, but that belies the sheer quantity of pure skiing you can do there. There are a staggering 550m of vertical descent, enough to satiate the most avid of snow monsters. Cupid Valley's nine pistes are perfect for intermediate skiers and snowboarders, while there is also some terrain for both beginners and advanced practitioners. **Yukidaruma-kogen, Sugawa, Yasuzuka-ku, Joetsu City. Tel: 025-593-2041. [www.yukidaruma-kogen.com](http://www.yukidaruma-kogen.com)**

## LERCH-SAN

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of skiing in Niigata, the Prefecture has launched a new character. Destined to become everyone's favorite European military cartoon figure, Major Theodor von Lerch gave the first-ever systematic skiing

lessons back in January 1911, on the slopes of Mt. Kanaya, in Takadamachi, Niigata—now Joetsu City. The Austrian officer was born in Pressburg, Bratislava (the current Slovak capital) and came to Japan to research the nation's military resources. He then made the obvious career transition to pioneering the new

winter leisure industry. Described as a trusting person who is kind to children and a bit of a ladies' man, Lerch-san is bound to bring mustaches back in fashion during the Niigata ski season.



HAKUBA VILLAGE

# HAKUBA PIEDMONT

Just a few hours from the city lie Hakuba's snow blanketed mountains. Metropolis helps you make snow-tracks to a dream winter getaway

In Nagano Prefecture, Japan's Northern Alps (Kita Arupusu) boast 3,000m of altitude—combined with world-famous powder snow. The site of the 1998 Winter Olympics, the area boasts premium hotels, restaurants and hot-spring outlets to warm up and comfort the most adventurous polar explorer. Choose from resorts in both Hakuba and Otari Village—set against the stunning Hakuba mountain range.

HAKUBA IWATAKE



Settle in Iwatake's family-run inns and enjoy an unparalleled vista of the Hakuba Three Peaks, along with the resort's 23 courses.  
[www.hakuba.jp/iwatake/en](http://www.hakuba.jp/iwatake/en)

HAKUBA MINEKATA



This resort's uncrowded slopes are perfect for intermediate- and beginner-level skiers. Enjoy a prime viewpoint from atop the mountain.  
[www.hakuba-minekata.com/e-intro.html](http://www.hakuba-minekata.com/e-intro.html)

HAKUBA SANOSAKA



Surrounded by forest and lakes, enjoy a variety of courses, plus a powder zone, terrain park and mogul course for a real challenge.  
[www.sanosaka.com/english](http://www.sanosaka.com/english)

HAKUBA GORYU



With 23 courses, two gondolas and 17 lifts, Hakuba Goryu offers combination lift passes for Hakuba 47 as well, giving you access to two resorts in one.  
<http://www.hakubaescal.com/winter>

**Heidi-Hof** A Swiss alpine hotel in the heart of Japan's Hakuba Happo

English-speaking staff. Pick-up and drop-off service. Rental skis and snowboards available.

Single room: ¥13,500    Twin room: ¥11,500    3/4 guest room: ¥10,500

Booking 0261-72-5010 3012 Hokujo, Hakuba-mura Kita-Azumi, Nagano [www.heidihof.com](http://www.heidihof.com)

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A hotel with hot spring right in front of Happo One ski resort

**HOTEL GORYUKAN**

3353 Ohaza-Hokujo, Hakuba-mura, Kita-Azumi, Nagano.  
0261-72-3939 | [info@goryukan.jp](mailto:info@goryukan.jp) | [www.goryukan.jp](http://www.goryukan.jp)

**HAKUBA TOKYU HOTEL**

the only hotel with prestige, elegance and 5 star hospitality that you can experience in Hakuba Ski Resort.

**HAKUBA TOKYU HOTEL**

0261-72-3001 [www.hakuba-r.tokyuhotels.co.jp](http://www.hakuba-r.tokyuhotels.co.jp)  
Mail Box no. 399-9301 Wadano, Happo, Hakuba-mura, Kita-azumi-gun, Nagano-ken, Japan

## OTARI VILLAGE

## HAKUBA 47



Skiing and boarding possibilities include a mogul course, half-pipe and snow park, snowshoe trekking, plus cultural activities to exercise other muscles.  
[www.hakuba47.co.jp/winter/en](http://www.hakuba47.co.jp/winter/en)

## HAKUBA HAPPO-ONE



This Olympic host with 13 ski runs, mogul courses, long carving runs and numerous beginners' slopes has enough bumps to make a mountain goat blush.  
[www.happonone.jp](http://www.happonone.jp)

## TSUGAIKE-KOGEN



Otari village's big boy has 10 courses (maximum 3.6km), and 22 lifts. There is also a vertical drop of 880m to try the nerves of the most extreme thrillseeker.  
[www.tsugaike.gr.jp](http://www.tsugaike.gr.jp)

## HAKUBA NORIKURA ONSEN



All levels find fulfillment here, with 19 courses to choose from, and 9 lifts to deliver you there. Check out the "Sky View Course" for the ultimate rush.  
[www.hakubanorikura.jp](http://www.hakubanorikura.jp)

## HAKUBA CORTINA



The vertiginous 709m drop here would make James Stewart reach for his hat. The resort has 15 slopes (maximum 42 degrees) serviced by six lifts.  
[www.hakubacortina.jp/language/english.html](http://www.hakubacortina.jp/language/english.html)

• Tourism Commission of Hakuba Village. Tel: 0261-72-7100. English info: <http://vill.hakuba.nagano.jp/english/top/ski>

• Otari Village Tourism Association. Tel: 0261-82-2233. English info: [www.otari-kanko.com/english](http://www.otari-kanko.com/english)

Panoramic view of the Northern Alps  
HOTEL HAKUBA

One night stay  
 + breakfast from ¥6,800  
 + two meals from ¥7,800

Ski Package  
 One night stay  
 + two meals  
 + one day lift pass from ¥9,800

Facilities: skis, snowboard, and snow clothing rental shop; public bath, hot springs, and souvenir shop.  
 5470-1 Hokujo Hakuba-mura, Kita-Azumi gun, NAGANO 〒399-9301  
 TEL: 0261-72-4444

[www.hotel-hakuba.com](http://www.hotel-hakuba.com)

Four Seasons Resort  
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Dec 17, 2011 – Apr 1, 2012 Winter Season Plans!

**WINTER PLAN**  
 An overnight stay with breakfast and dinner and one-day spa pass

**SKI & SNOWBOARD PLAN**  
 An overnight stay with breakfast and dinner and ski lift pass

HAKUBA Alps Hotel  
 Hakuba-Norikura Highland,  
 Otari-mura, Kita-Azumigun, Nagano-ken  
**TEL. 0261-82-2811**  
**WWW.HAKUBA-ALPS.CO.JP**

**Winter Package**  
 One night pack + 2 meal:  
**¥8,000 ~ ¥18,000**  
 Tsugaike lift ticket:  
**¥10,000yen ~ ¥21,500**

Reservation at <http://www.marion-s.com/english>  
 9422 Tsugaike Highland, Otari-mura,  
 Kita-azumigun, Nagano  
 (Two minutes from the gondola platform)  
**Tel.0261-83-2606**

**HOTEL GREEN PLAZA  
 HAKUBA**

[www.hakubacortina.jp](http://www.hakubacortina.jp)  
 Phone : 0570-097-489

# Discover Hakuba!

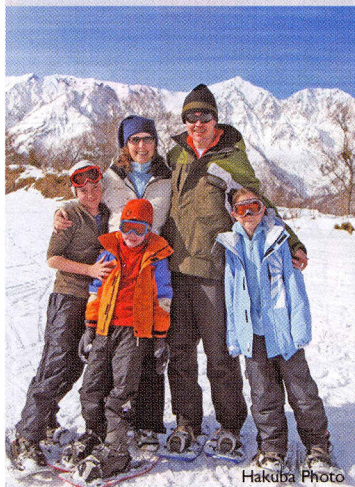
Deep in Japan's  
Northern Alps



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[www.evergreen-hakuba.com](http://www.evergreen-hakuba.com)

0261-72-5150

## EVERGREEN OUTDOOR CENTER



Nestled amid Japan's Northern Alps, in Hakuba, Nagano, Evergreen Outdoor Center offers people of all backgrounds a retreat among snowy peaks, far away from the madness of city life.

Ranging from wild to mild, Evergreen's activities are suitable for single travelers, couples and families alike.

Experience the thrill of skiing or snowboarding in deep powder on a backcountry tour, or hone your skills in the terrain park. Glide on Nordic skis along scenic cross-country trails, hike through majestic snow-covered forests and across open alpine fields, on a snowshoe tour.

For those keen to show their little ones a good time outdoors, enroll them in full-day ski lessons or multi-day programs including lunch, a fun race, a certificate ceremony—and even some video to take home. Get your toddlers started early with half-day skiing lessons, or go out assured leaving them in the capable hands of Evergreen's wonderful staff at daycare services.

For boarders who want to take it to another level, this year Evergreen will be providing the Canadian Association of Snowboard Instructors (CASD) Level 1 training and certification in Hakuba. Meanwhile, the safety conscious might want to have a go at Evergreen's avalanche safety courses, sanctioned by the Canadian Avalanche Center.

With a wide range of fun activities, an international crew of professionals, the slope-side organic "Roots Cafe," and a panoramic mountain range on its doorstep, Evergreen in Hakuba is the perfect first step to your best winter yet.

4377 Hokujo, Hakuba-mura, Nagano. Tel: 0261-72-5150. Email: [tours@evergreen.outdoors.com](mailto:tours@evergreen.outdoors.com). [www.evergreen-hakuba.com](http://www.evergreen-hakuba.com)

## KAMESEI RYOKAN



Kamesei Ryokan is your base for exploring Nagano, and the heart and soul of Japan. This traditional Japanese inn features a wood-burning stove, gardens, and spacious tatami mat guestrooms where you can relax in a yukata robe. The onsen hot spring baths—including a family one that can be reserved—are open to

the winter air, allowing you to bask in the sunlight or starlight while you soak.

Guests can feast on gourmet *kaiseki*-style dinners as well as full breakfasts—highly recommended to truly appreciate the ryokan experience. Vegetarian meals are available.

Kamesei Ryokan offers easy access to the best of Nagano. Jigokudani's snow monkeys, the spiritual Togakushi Mountain, Matsumoto Castle and the Japanese Alps are all popular day trips. What's more, Nagano's top ski areas—Hakuba, Nozawa and Shiga Kogen—are just an hour's drive away, making Kamesei a perfect stopover before or after skiing.

Tyler, Kamesei's American proprietor is always happy to help you plan your trip. Night-view tours, early-morning zazen meditation, and Thursday night Lion Dance practices are just some of the complimentary activities available for guests.

Getting there is easy on the shinkansen to Ueda station, and then the local Shinano line for four stops and a free pick-up from Togura station. *Metropolis* readers can have 45 minutes free use of the family bath, offer valid until June 30, 2012.

2-15-1 Kamiyamada Onsen, Chikuma City, Nagano. Tel: 026-275-1032. Email: [omotenashi@kamesei.jp](mailto:omotenashi@kamesei.jp). [www.kamesei.jp](http://www.kamesei.jp)

## HAKUBA MOMINOKI HOTEL



Sitting at the foot of Japan's most scenic mountain range, Mominoki is a premier hotel in an unbeatable location. The beautiful lobby features an open fireplace and a lounge for guests to relax and take in the mountain views. The Happo Kokusai lift—situated at the finish line of the men's downhill events for the 1998

Winter Olympics—is just a three-minute walk away. No matter what your favorite wintertime pursuit, Hakuba Mominoki Hotel offers the ideal gateway: it boasts indoor and outdoor onsen, ski and snowboard rentals, and even shuttle and bus rentals to various ski resorts.

Most rooms enjoy superb views of the surrounding mountains, and all are equipped with wireless internet connections. Guests can choose from a pair of restaurants that specialize in contemporary European cuisine and premium Japanese steak, plus a wide selection of international wines. For après-ski relaxation, The Pub is the only bar of its kind in Hakuba—an authentic British watering hole with Guinness on tap, billiards, darts and live music. It's a fantastic place to warm up for the evening. Or, guests can decide to stay in and enjoy the hotel's exquisite massage services to assuage the happy post-ski muscle ache.

Hakuba Mominoki Hotel also has a private heliport that offers sightseeing flights and direct transportation to and from Narita Airport.

**4683-2 Wadano, Hakuba, Nagano. Tel: 0261-72-5001. Email: [reservations@mominokihotel.com](mailto:reservations@mominokihotel.com). [www.mominokihotel.com](http://www.mominokihotel.com)**

## JAPAN TOURIST



Japan has never been great at marketing herself to the outside world. Despite Japan's greater population and—some would say—cultural interest, South Korea has had more tourist arrivals over the last few years. Officially, this is put down to three reasons: the language problem, the high yen, and Fukushima.

But the real reason, especially prior to March, is Japan's lack of visibility in the international tourist market. Online, you can find plenty of cultural/economic info about Japan, but a quick trip to Lonely Planet or TripAdvisor will show that the tourism content is out-of-date, poorly translated—or just very sparse.

Here at *Metropolis*, we decided to fix the problem by launching Japan's first interactive travel website on November 4. The site comes with user recommendations, abundant editorial from nationwide partners, and even a rewards system for the redemption of points against goods and services. For aspiring writers, you can earn everything from flights to hotel rooms as a Semi-Pro Contributor. Find out more on our website.

JapanTourist is already at 200 articles a month. Once we hit our stride early next year, we are expecting more than 900. This unprecedented number—combined with user recommendations (*kuchikomi*)—will become an irresistible force in the Asian travel industry. These concepts are already drawing great interest from the market's traditional players. We hope that [japantourist.jp](http://japantourist.jp), along with the country's natural charms, will help make Japan 2012's hot travel destination.

**[www.japantourist.jp](http://www.japantourist.jp)**

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**JapanTourist.jp**

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*The Pub*  
Mominoki Après Ski Bar - Hakuba's only English pub

Web [www.mominokihotel.com](http://www.mominokihotel.com) Tel 0261-72-4453 Open 16:30 till late