

powderlife

NISEKO ニセコ

Issue 36 // December 31 to Jan 13 // 2012

WINTER SPORTS * ENTERTAINMENT * REAL ESTATE

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SNOWMOBILING

Power through the powder

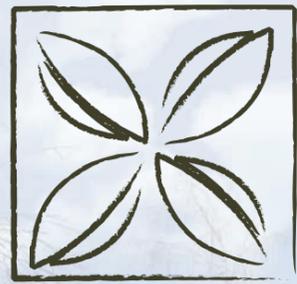
NEW YEAR 2011

Japanese traditions and rituals

RESORT GUIDE

Your guide to Niseko – page 27





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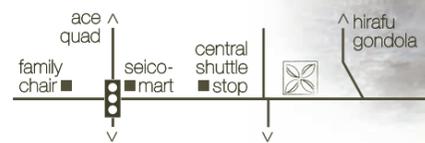
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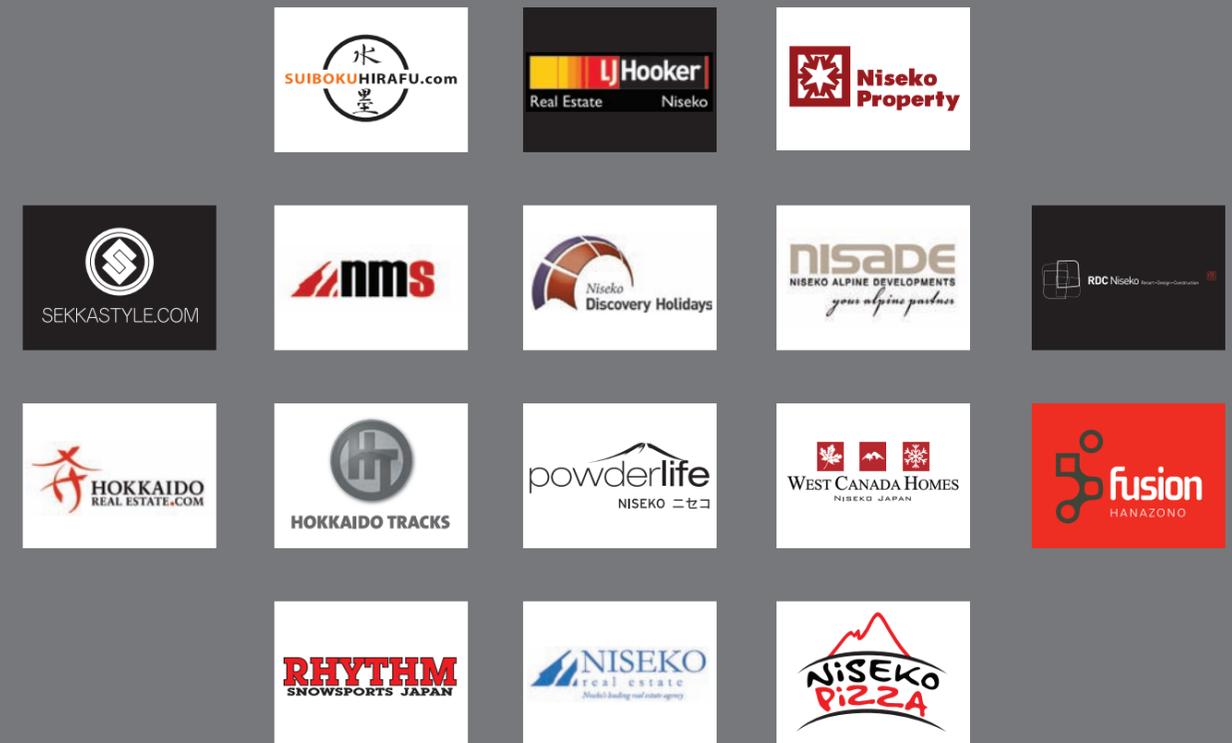
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HIRAFU-ZAKA MAIN STREET MASTER PLAN



NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

CG Image, Final construction may vary slightly



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powderlife

NISEKO ニセコ

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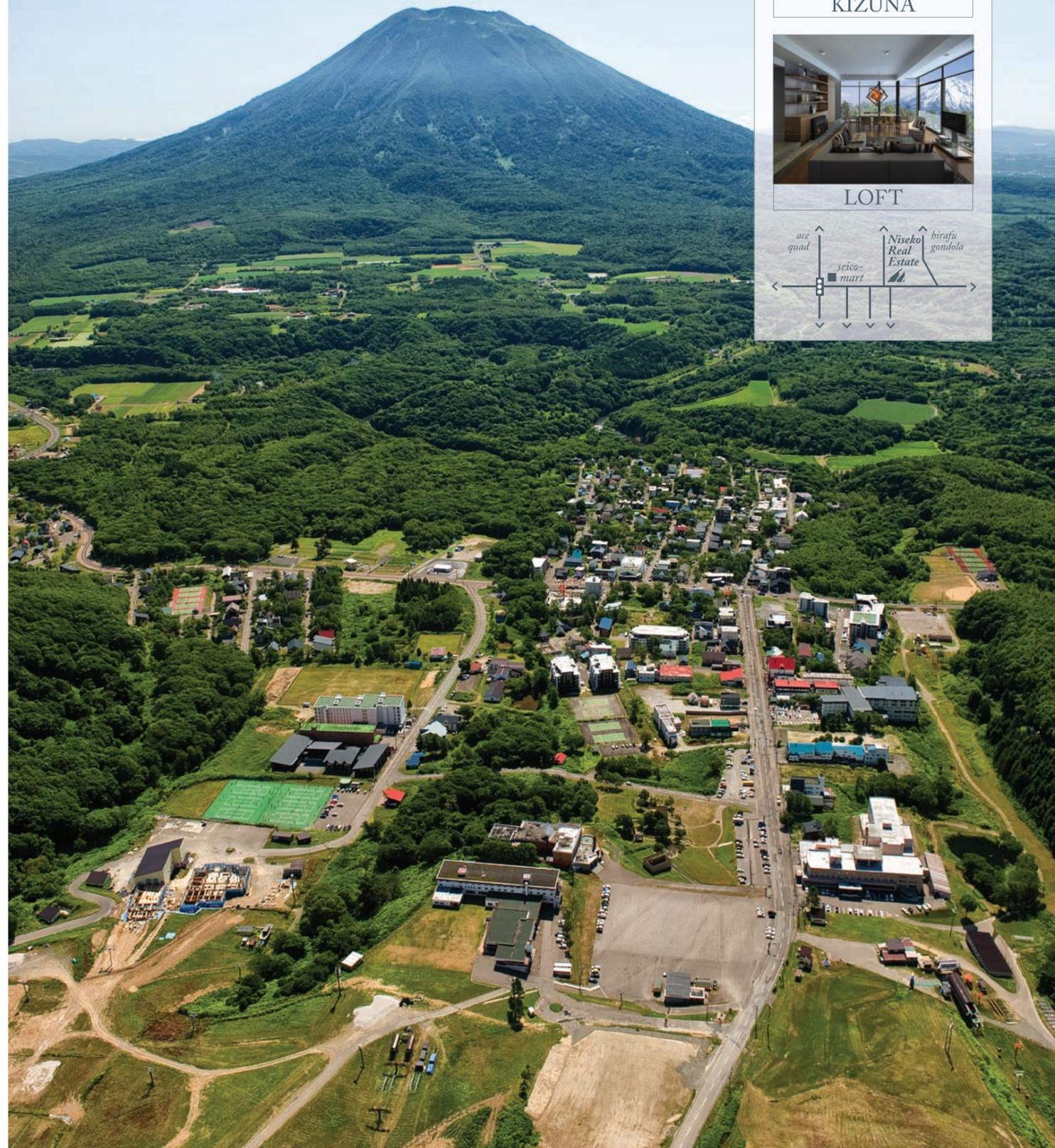
Niseko's first English language periodical magazine - published every two weeks in Niseko between December and March, once a year as a globally distributed Niseko promotional issue (Powderlife Global Edition).
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cover // snowmobiling with Black Diamond Tours
photo // azza-niseko photography sledder // Andrew Spragg

NISEKO

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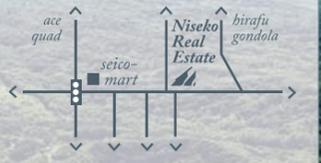
Featured Properties



KIZUNA



LOFT



* EDITOR'S NOTE



photo // azza - niseko photography

IT'S the last day of 2011 as this issue hits the streets, so we hiked up the mountain to find out about some of your New Year's resolutions.

Most of them were quite ambitious and had to do with snow! From learning to do backflips on skis to being able to ride switch in powder, but some got into a spiritual mood while contemplating their New Year's resolution.

Our resolution is to always wear a helmet. You can still look cool and kawaii (cute) wearing a helmet and surely you don't want to end up like the rider on our Snap page (p. 14). If you don't have one yet, enter our "Pro Ski Stack of the Week" competition and you could win a new model from Pro Ski.

Celebrate New Year's Eve watching the spectacular torch run and fireworks in Hirafu and check out our events calendar "In the Loop" (p. 12) for parties to make this a night to remember. You could start the first day of the New Year on a snowmobile cruising through Niseko's backcountry, or just relax from the long night before and fill your belly with Japanese soul food, which you can find out more about in our Eat and Drink section.

For those of you who would like to explore more of Japan after your skiing holiday in Niseko, this issue's travel feature takes you to one of the most romantic getaways in Japan, which is also a World Heritage site.

If you have travelled Japan and Hokkaido and snapped some good pictures, please send them in and they might get published.

On behalf of the team here at Powderlife, enjoy this issue and the powder. Happy New Year!

Kerstin Winter, Powderlife Managing Editor, kerstin@powderlife.com

今号が2011の最終号となりますが、今回は山に登り、皆さんの新年の目標を聞いてきました。

「バックフリップが出来る様になりたい」、「パウダーで優雅に滑れる様になりたい」などの雪に関する目標が殆どでした。しかしある人は新年の目標をまだ考えている時点で精神を集中させているようでした。

私たちの新年の目標は「いつもヘルメットを装着すること」もちろんヘルメットを被ると言ってもクールでかわいい物。欲しいヘルメットはスナップページに載っているようなヘルメットとは程遠い。もしヘルメットをまだ持っていない人は、今週行われるPro Skiの"Stack of the week"競争に参加してPro Skiのニューモデルヘルメットをゲットしてみたいか。

グランド比羅夫で毎年行われるスキーでのトーチランと、花火で新年を迎えるのも、とても素敵。年越しのイベントについては"in the loop"のページを参考にしてください。色々なパーティーの情報が載っていますよ。年越しを終えたあとの新年第一目の過ごし方は?スノーモービルでニセコのバックカントリーをクルーズするのも最高。でも長い夜で疲れた人には日本の心から温まる料理を食べてほっこりするという日になりそう。レストランや食べ物についての情報は"Eat and Drink"セクションを参考にしてくださいね。

ニセコでスキー休暇を過ごして、それでもまだ満足が行かないという人のために、今号に日本国内で世界遺産とされているとてもロマンチックな場所を紹介しています。もしも北海道や日本国内の旅行をして、良い写真が撮れたという方は是非パウダーライフに送ってください。もしかするとこの雑誌に載るかも。

今号を楽しんでいただけたら幸いです。パウダーライフのチームを代表し皆様に良いお年が訪れます様にお祈り申し上げます!

カースティン ウィンター パウダーライフマガジン編集者, kerstin@powderlife.com

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| one way | | one way | | from | |
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|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Departs Niseko | Arrives Airport | Departs Airport | Arrives Niseko | Departs Niseko | Arrives Sapporo |
| 08:00 | 10:30 | 12:00 | 14:30 | 09:30 | 12:00 |
| 09:00 | 11:30 | 14:00 | 16:30 | Sapporo City - Niseko | |
| 10:00 | 12:30 | 15:00 | 17:30 | | |
| 11:00 | 13:30 | 16:30 | 19:00 | Departs Sapporo | Arrives Niseko |
| 15:00 | 17:30 | 19:00 | 21:30 | 12:30 | 15:00 |
| 17:00 | 19:30 | 21:30 | 23:59 | | |

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* FLUFF // light news & information

BEST EARLY SEASON SNOW IN 50 YEARS!



Kyushu high school students enjoying their first time in the snow

LOCALS had high hopes for this season with a very rare "double La Nina" year – and the powder-filled grins of skiers coming off the hill tell you all you need to know: it's a fantastic start to the season.

High pressures systems over the arctic keep the snow systems coming and so far this season we've had just one snowless day. We're about three weeks ahead of last season in terms of base depth, and Japanese TV reports this as the best early season snow in 50 years.

It might be tough for businesses but for skiers and boarders this is a perfect scenario: fewer tracks than usual and more snow than ever, repaying the Niseko faithful with an amazing season start. And indications are this will continue for months yet.

by Chris Chan

OMISOKA, JAPANESE NEW YEAR'S EVE

WHILE New Year's in Niseko usually involves big powder turns on the mountain, soaking in hot spring baths, indulging in Hokkaido's array of great food and watching the spectacular torch run and fireworks, the rest of Japan has a very different way of ringing in the New Year – one that involves ages old traditions, ritual, and preparation.

New Year's Day is the most important day of the year in Japanese tradition, and therefore New Year's Eve – omisoka – is spent doing a thorough clean of the house, taking a long bath to clean oneself, and making sure one has clean clothes to wear in order to bring in the New Year in a fresh, clean state, not just in body, but in mind as well.

Eating a bowl of toshikoshisoba at 11pm is also an important Japanese tradition. Toshiko-

shi literally means to "cross over from one year to another", and eating the long noodles are said to help in the crossing. It is considered to be bad luck to leave any toshi-koshi soba uneaten, so make sure you eat every last bite!

Most families across Japan either stay up to listen or go to a temple to listen to Joyanokane, which begins at the stroke of midnight. Joyanokane is the tolling of the great giant bells or gongs at Japan's Buddhist temples; the bell at the Chion-in Temple in Kyoto weighs 74 tonnes! Every bell is struck exactly 108 times, and it signifies getting rid of each of the 108 earthly human desires, called bonnos, believed to cause earthly suffering. Japanese Buddhists believe, by hearing the bells toll 108 times, you can be relieved of all the bonnos, and begin the New Year with a fresh slate.

On New Year's Day it is important to eat your first meal with new chopsticks! All the meals eaten on the first three days of the New Year were traditionally cooked on omisoka, and are called osechi. Cooking during the first three days of the New Years was said to be bad for the Kitchen Kami, the Kitchen God, so



megumi praying for a prosperous 2012.

everything had to be prepared beforehand. Today, in modern day Japan, most people just buy osechi at the grocery or convenience store, and only eat it on the first day of the New Year. Another reason why osechi used to be prepared in advance was in order for New Years to be spent worshipping at Buddhist or Shinto altars, making resolutions, and praying for good luck.

QUIRKY DRIED SQUID SOUVENIR



allie & wennie in squid heaven

IF you're stumped for an original souvenir to take home to your family and friends why not try this great gift idea: dried squid on a stick.

They come in all different shapes, sizes, and various flavours including, soy sauce, bbq, salted and more. They are sold dry-sealed in a bag so you can fly home to the other side of the world with it. You can find them at most

supermarkets, and if you're lucky you may even find one that is still completely intact with tentacles, eyes and all.

Even if your friends never end up eating it you will definitely earn extra points for originality and shock value! And for those of you that are brave enough to eat it you will be pleasantly surprised at how delicious dried squid is, especially accompanied with a cold beer.

* NISEKO NEWS // tracking down local stories

BLACK DIAMOND TOUR NEWS!

THIS winter Black Diamond Tours has moved back to the Niseko Village base area and opened up a new office directly opposite the Milk Kobo and just a few hundred metres down the road from Black Diamond Lodge.

BD will now be running its guided powder trips from this office along with introductory snowmobile tours in the wide open farmland terrain directly in front of their location. As this magazine goes to print, BD is also just putting the finishing touches on their 6 foot indoor skate ramp so if you ride wood as well as snow, drop by for an off-snow day or evening.

For the 3rd season, BD will also be continuing to offer their popular (and free!!) 1 hour back-country awareness seminar every Tuesday night from the new office. Access the new office with

the Niseko Free Passport bus which stops right in front of the office. BD will be offering free shuttles from Hirafu for anyone interested in snowmobiling or the seminar. Shuttle meeting point is at the Hirafu Seicomart with pickups scheduled 15 minutes prior to snowmobile tour start times and at 5:45pm Tuesday nights for the seminar. Afterwards don't forget to stop off at the Milk Kobo to sample their famous choux cream made fresh with local dairy products, or head up to the Village gondola to see how the snow is on the East side.



photo // david levin - courtesy black diamond lodge

YOGA CLASSES KICK OFF



YOGA classes are now available six days a week in Hirafu Village. Powder Yoga, run by Marika and Kanami (left), can be found at J-Sekka in the Kushi room.

There are 3 styles of classes to choose from: Ashtanga, Flow, and Yin/Yang.

Yoga is a great complement to the demands that skiing and snowboarding put on the body, and is also a great way to build strength and flexibility while helping to prevent injuries. When practiced regularly you will look and feel fitter, be more energetic, happier and more peaceful.

Classes are every morning at 9am, and run for 90mins. No class on Wednesdays. Please arrive 15 mins. early and meet at the J-Sekka reception upstairs. Cost: drop-in ¥1500, 3 class card ¥1200 per class, 6 class card ¥1000 per class, private lessons available. - powderyoga@gmail.com

NISEKO PIZZA RELOCATES

NISEKO Pizza now has a new and improved location just below J-Sekka on route 343, across the street from the Vale.

This winter they will continue to serve their classic pizza and pasta menu, but will have some new editions such as freshly made local pasta, a big selection of Italian wine, eight beers on tap, and a grilled menu with steaks, pork, lamb, chicken, and even Hokkaido venison.

This will be owner Cezar Constantin's (right) fifth year of producing tasty pizzas for the people of Niseko, with the help of executive chef Kent Prior (left). In its first year Niseko Pizza operated out of its portable pizza bus called "La Andy", the last three years the guys worked in a shop on Hirafu-Zaka Street, and now the fifth in their new location. They are open 7 days a week from 5pm til late, and will stay open year-round. They also do take-out and delivery.



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Grand HIRAFU
http://www.grand-hirafu.jp

*** IN THE LOOP // what's on around town**

**DEC
2011**

**31 Torch light run
大晦日 たいまつ滑走**
Come and enjoy our annual torchlight ski-down taking place in Grand Hirafu, Niseko Village, and Annupuri.
毎年恒例のイベント。
11:50pm/グランヒラフ、9:15pm/ニセコビレッジ、11:30pm アンヌプリスキー場。

Start // 11.50 pm @ Grand Hirafu
Start // 9.15 pm @ Niseko Village
Start // 11.30 pm @ Annupuri Ski Resort

**31 End of year countdown and fireworks
新年カウントダウン花火**
Ring in the New Year with a beautiful fireworks display in Hirafu Village, Niseko Village, and Annupuri.
カウントダウンと盛大な花火で新年を祝おう!

Start // 11.50 pm
Place // respective ski resorts
Contact // 0136 58 2080

**31 NYE in space
ニューイヤーズイブ インスペース**
Entry via bloblo. Interplanetary strip pole room. Live DJs playing from Uranus. ¥200 Cyber shots.
ポールレームでのインタープラネタリー ストリップ、天王星からのDJライブあり。サイバーショット 200円。

Start // 7.00 pm
Place // blo*blo
Contact // 0136 22 1269



**JAN
2012**

**1 New Year Sunrise Gondola
初日の出 Gondola**
It is a Japanese tradition to see the sunrise on the first day of the New Year. Adult ¥1000 Child ¥500
初日の出 Gondola - ニセコビレッジ Gondola、大人1000円、子供500円。

Start // 6.15 am
Place // Niseko Village Gondola
Contact // 0136 44 2211

**1 Koryu Taiko Drumming
太鼓グループ 鼓流**
Niseko's famous koryu taiko drumming group will perform in the snow complete with audience participation.
ニセコの有名な太鼓グループ 羊蹄太鼓保存会「鼓流」の演奏。

Start // 4.00 pm
Place // In front of The Niseko Company office
Contact // 0136 21 7274

**2 New Year Fun Jump Session
ニューイヤーズジャンプセッション**
Show off your best trick on a 6 meter kicker in Hanazono and win ski and snowboard gear. **Free entry.**
花園キッカー ポコジャンプ (エントリーフリー) 餅つきあり。

Start // 8.00 am registration 9.00am
Place // Hanazono Ski Resort
Contact // 0136 21 6655

**4 Live Yotei Taiko
羊蹄太鼓**
Live performance of traditional Japanese drums at The Flame Bar.
伝統的な和太鼓のライブパフォーマンス。

Start // 9.00 pm
Place // Flame Bar at the Hilton
Contact // 0136 44 2211

**6 Après At Herbies Umbrella Bar
アプレスキー ハービーズ アンブレラバー**
The only ski-in ski-out après bar in Niseko. Happy Hour between 3-4pm. ¥400 beers, spirits, and shots of schnapps, hot sake, and 3 beers on tap. 各種スピリット、シュナップス、熱燗と3種類のビール各400円。

Start // 3.00 pm
Place // Herbies Umbrella Bar
Contact // NA

**7 Kenji Matsumoto with Kanako Hayashi
松本健司 with 林加奈子**
Tenor sax and piano jazz numbers with many surprise guest musicians.
テナーサクソと、ピアノのジャズナンバーをお楽しみください。たくさんのお客様ミュージシャンも参加予定。

Start // 9.00 pm
Place // Half Note Jazz bar and café
Contact // 0136 23 2727

**8 Early morning gondola
アーリーモーニング Gondola**
Take this opportunity to guarantee first tracks in Niseko Village. Adult and Child ¥1000
ニセコビレッジのファーストトラックをすべろう。大人、子供 1000円

Start // 7.30 am
Place // Niseko Village Gondola
Contact // 0136 44 2211

**9 Full moon party
アーリーモーニング Gondola**
Hip hop, breaks, and dubstep howling till late. ¥500 tiki cocktails. Possible thai curry.
ヒップホップ、ブレイクス、ダブステップでたのしもう。ティキカクテル 500円、タイカレーあり。

Start // 7.00 pm
Place // blo*blo
Contact // 0136 22 1269



**10 Grand Hirafu first tracks
グランヒラフ ファーストトラック**
A two hour demonstration of traditional monochrome Japanese ink painting by Nishimura-Sensei. 1月限定で、通常より30分前に滑り出せます。大人、子供 500円(通常のリフト券は使用不可)

Start // 8:00 am
Place // Grand Hirafu
Contact // 0136 22 0109

**11 Apres Ski at The Green Leaf
アプレスキー グリーンリーフホテル**
Warm up your body and soul by the fireplace at Tomioka White with 50% off all drinks. トミオカホワイト 飲み物50%オフ 暖炉と飲み物であたたまるう!

Start // 5.00 PM - 7:00 pm
Place // The Green Leaf
Contact // 0136 44 3311

**12 Niseko Winter Music Festival
ニセコ冬の音楽祭**
An intimate concert of classical favorites performed by The Australian Chamber Orchestra
オーストラリア室内管弦楽団の演奏。

Start // 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Place // The Hilton, Niseko Village
Contact // 0136 21 2551

**13 Niseko Winter Music Festival
ニセコ冬の音楽祭**
An intimate concert of classical favorites performed by The Australian Chamber Orchestra
オーストラリア室内管弦楽団の演奏。

Start // 7:00 pm
Place // Hanazono 308
Contact // 0136 21 2551



Call for an appointment or just drop in.
Ph. 0136 22 0399 - info@nisekomassage.com

| | 30 minute | 45 minute | 60 minute | 90 minute |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Early bird (finish prior to 2pm) | ¥3,500 | ¥5,000 | ¥6,000 | ¥8,000 |
| Normal Price | ¥5,000 | ¥7,000 | ¥8,000 | ¥11,000 |

Niseko Physio
Your English-speaking sports injury centre in middle Hirafu. Taping, braces, cremes and Australian trained winter sports physiotherapists.

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Ph. 0136 22 0399 - info@nisekophysio.com



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| 60 minutes ¥7,000 | 60 minutes ¥8,300 |
| 90minutes ¥10,000 | 90 minutes ¥11,500 |
| | Foot 20minutes ¥2,800 |
| | Head 20minutes ¥3,000 |

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Pick up availabel. On-site massage available (extra 1000yen)

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powderlife
NISEKO ニセコ

* SNAP

MEET THE LOCALS



Name // Sun Young Han

THIS is Sun Young Han's first season in Niseko. She's from Korea, and just finished University back home in Seoul. She would like to stay in Japan for the summer.



Name // Nobuhisa Ishida

NOBUHISA Ishida, originally from Kumamoto, has worked two seasons as a Liftie for Grand Hirafu. He came to Niseko for the powder but also loves onsens.



Name // Tsumumie Konishi

IN 1996 Tsumumie Konishi came to Niseko from Osaka because she read about it in a magazine. Fifteen years later she is still here, working her dream job as a ski instructor.

Question // What's Your New Year's Resolution?



NICK Hannah from Melbourne, Australia wants to find peace and keep it, and **Willy Naylor** from Yorkshire, England wants to catch the first lift of the day twice this season!



SOPHIE Cossens from New Zealand, and **Tanya Hutchins** from Australia want to learn how to ride switch in powder. **Hide Yukikon** from Hyogo, Japan wants to improve his English.



HARUKA Soga and **Shiori Fukuda** from Oita in southern Japan have never seen snow before. They want to learn how to ski and find true love!



ASHER Lewis from New Zealand wants to learn how to ski faster. **William NG** from Hong Kong wants to land a backflip on skis.

PROSKI STACK



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HELMET FROM
PROSKI

ENTER TO WIN A HELMET FROM PROSKI
MAYBE you don't usually wear a helmet? But perhaps you had a painful wake-up call and realised it might not be such a bad idea after all. Send us your best stack photo with a short description on how you ended up in such a mess. Email your photo and you could win a helmet from ProSki. Submit entries to kerstin@powderlife.com.

* FLASH

NISEKO PIZZA

BIRTHDAY BASH//

NISEKO Pizza owner Cezar Constantin celebrated his birthday by generously offering 2 for 1 pizzas and half-priced beers. Word got out around town and by 7pm it was almost impossible to snag a table inside and there was a huge line-up down the hall waiting to join the party.



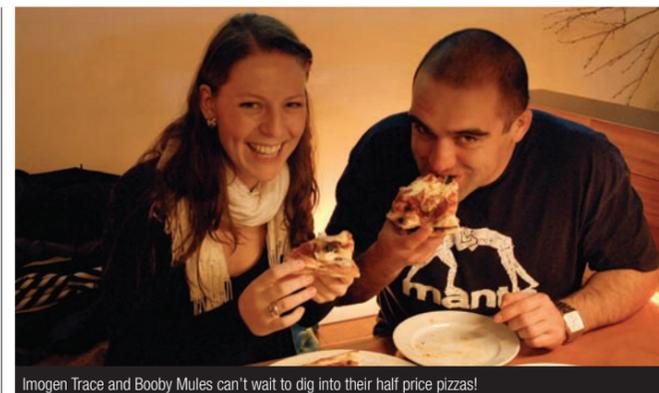
Amber Marquie's taking her man out for a Quatro Fromaggio and Neapolitana pizza.



Chizuru Otaka, Yayo Hanamoto and Alex Casey are sipping on their 2 for 1 beers as they await their pizzas.



What more can you ask for? Cold beer, yummy pizza, maybe a hot girlfriend?



Imogen Trace and Booby Mules can't wait to dig into their half price pizzas!



Julian Kerr and Stu Cady looking for a good snowboard deal upstairs at Rhythm



Rachel Hall, Michelle Smith and Keri Reid flashed us a quick smile while waiting for free champagne



Free beer, champagne and shots – Say no more!

RHYTHM SNOWSPORTS

OPENING PARTY//

RHYTHM rang in their 2011-2012 opening with free beer, champagne, and 30% off their newest 2012 retail gear. Both floors of the spacious store were packed full of shoppers trying to get their hands on the newest and trendiest gear of the season.



Katherine Bont, Andrew Slater and Asuka Slater are enjoying cold beer by the rental ski boots



Kanako, Kazu and Shisho browsing for the latest 2012 goggles

* EAT & DRINK // restaurant review - okonomiyaki jyu



PHOTOGRAPHY AND WORDS BY // Kanami Anderson

JYU is the place to go if you are looking for okonomiyaki prepared the traditional Osaka way in a warm, cozy and remote setting. Located at the T junction of Routes 66 and 343 between Annupuri and Higashiyama, it is well worth the 15 minute drive from Hirafu Village to get there.

If you don't know what okonomiyaki is, you have to try it. It is one of the tastiest dishes in Japanese cuisine. The name is derived from the word okonomi, which means "what you like", and yaki, which means "to cook" or "to fry". The best explanation for what this dish is like is that it is a savory pancake made with cabbage, grated yam, flour, and egg as a base, and pretty much anything or whatever you would like to put in it. Beef, squid, pork, scallops, mochi (Japanese sticky rice pounded and shaped), kimchi, octopus, pork, natto (fermented soy beans), or cheese. You name it! And you can put it in.

As I enter Jyu, I am warmly

welcomed by the owners Tetsuo and Akiko Enoue. They are from Osaka, where okonomiyaki is said to have originated from, but after a visit to Niseko in 1995 they couldn't stay away from the Hokkaido snow. They would return twice a year, every year, for a quick holiday to snowboard, but would always have to return to their restaurant business back home. Finally in 2001 they moved to Hokkaido, and decided to try opening an Osaka-style okonomiyaki restaurant in Niseko. Jyu opened in 2002, and it has been a success ever since.

I order a seafood okonomiyaki, and to Mr. Enoue's insistence he adds a kimchi negiyaki as well to my order. Where okonomiyaki's main ingredients are cabbage, Worcester sauce, bonito flakes, and Japanese mayonnaise, negiyaki is made with spring onions, soy sauce, tempura bits, and lemon. I watch as Tetsuo and Akiko skillfully prepare my meal on their hotplate, and when it is ready they bring it out to my own personal hotplate built into my table.



Okonomiyaki has a strong flavour, and is quite filling, where as negiyaki is quite a bit lighter in flavour and density and is perfect for those with a smaller appetite. Together they complement each other nicely as I alternate from bite to bite, and even my last piece is the perfect temperature and delicious thanks to the hotplate. For those of you with really big appetites, especially after a long day on the mountain, I highly recommend their modanyaki, which is okonomiyaki, with a layer of yakisoba (fried noodles) inside!

If you have a big group, Jyu has a comfy tatami room that can fit up to

18 people, and a dining room that can fit up to 15 people, as well as a counter area.

Reservations are recommended at night because it gets very busy.

Location: 263 Soga, Niseko Hokkaido, Japan.

Open: 4.30pm - 9pm Weekdays, 11.30am - 9pm Weekends and Public Holidays They are closed Wednesday and every 3rd Tuesday.

Tel: 0136 44 2336

KAMIMURA

FIRST FLOOR, YAMA SHIZEN WEST

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www.kamimura-niseko.com

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*** IRRASHAIMASSE // "welcome!" – great local businesses**



RAKUICHI SOBA, Annupuri, Tatsuru and Midori Rai.

TUCKED away in Annupuri is a gem called Rakuichi Soba run by Tatsuru and Midori Rai. Before they opened their restaurant, the Rais ran the pension next door for thirty years. During this time they started to make soba for the guests staying there. It was so popular that eventually they decided to close the pension, and pursue their passion for soba-making full-time by opening Rakuichi in 2000. The secret to their Niseko-famous soba? Preparing their dough fresh every morning using 100 per cent buckwheat, and made to order right in front of your eyes. When you turn off Road 66 into Annupuri it's the first driveway on your right.

アンヌプリ そば処楽一 頼立さんと、頼美どりさん

アンヌプリには隠れ家のような蕎麦屋がある。その名も「そば処楽一」。頼立さんと、頼美どりさんによって経営されている。実は頼さん、30年間となりでペンションを営んでいた。この時から、ペンションに滞在している人たちに蕎麦を振る舞っていたという。この蕎麦がおいしいという評判と、当人の蕎麦への熱い情熱が重なり、2000年にとうとう蕎麦屋「そば処楽一」をオープンした。この蕎麦屋がニセコでここまで有名になった理由とは、それは100パーセントそば粉を使用しているという事。また毎朝、新鮮な生地を作っている事。そして人気の秘訣は注文をすると目の前で蕎麦を打ってくれるという事だ。道道66号線からニセコアンヌプリスキー場入り口に入るとすぐに右にあるのが有名な隠れ家「そば処楽一」。是非とも足を運んでいただきたい。

YU SUI NO SATO, Tofu shop, Makkari.

THIS is a must-see place for those who love to taste the unusual. Made of Mt. Yotei spring water and "secret ingredients" the Yu sui no sato Tofu just melts in your mouth. Taste dozens of flavors for free! And it is only a short trip from Niseko to get to Makkari village. Sample Black Sesame Tofu, Wasabi Tofu and "Great Tofu" or indulge in Green Beans Tofu, Seafood Tofu and Cheese Tofu. There are just too many different kinds of tofu to list them all. You can stock up on tofu as souvenirs for your family and fill your bottles with fresh mountain water, just outside Yu sui no sato.

真狩にある「湧水の里 名水とうふ」

いつもと違うものを食べてみたいという方にはココをおすすめ! 湧水の里 名水とうふ。ここでは羊蹄山の湧き水を使い「秘密の材料」を使用し豆腐を作っている。ここではニセコから真狩村へ向かう途中にあり、無料で沢山の味が楽しめる。そしてそのお味は... 口の中でとろけてしまうほど最高! 色々な種類の味が楽しめるが、面白い物を紹介しよう。まずはよくあるごま豆腐、そしてわさび豆腐、また「最高の豆腐」と呼ばれる緑豆豆腐、海鮮豆腐そしてチーズ豆腐などだ。ここでは書ききれないほどの豆腐の種類が揃っている。ここで豆腐のお土産を買った後には、湧水の里のお店を出たところにある新鮮な羊蹄山の湧き水を空きボトルに入れて帰って帰ってはいかがだろうか。



DELIVERY MENU (available 5 - 11pm)

NISEKO PIZZA

WWW.NISEKOPIZZA.JP (0136) 55 5553

Gourmet Pizzas

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| Margherita M ¥1,500 L ¥2,800 | Pepperoni M ¥1,700 L ¥3,200 | Hawaiian M ¥1,700 L ¥3,200 | BBQ Chicken M ¥1,900 L ¥3,600 | Vegetarian M ¥1,900 L ¥3,600 | Andy's M ¥1,900 L ¥3,600 |
| | | | | | |
| Meat M ¥1,900 L ¥3,600 | Supreme M ¥2,000 L ¥3,800 | Bacon Lovers M ¥1,900 L ¥3,600 | BBQ Chicken & Bacon M ¥1,900 L ¥3,600 | Capriccosa M ¥1,800 L ¥3,400 | Cheese M ¥1,500 L ¥2,800 |
| | | | | | |
| BBQ Ribs M ¥2,300 L ¥4,400 | Gamberetti Parmegiana M ¥2,200 L ¥4,200 | Genovese M ¥2,400 L ¥4,600 | Quatro Formaggio M ¥2,200 L ¥4,200 | Bianco & Prosciutto M ¥1,700 L ¥3,200 | Napolitana M ¥2,200 L ¥4,200 |

Additional Standard Toppings ¥150 per topping

Anchovies . Garlic Sauce . Mushrooms . Red Onion . Capsicum Pepperoni . Italian Sausage . Pork Sausage . Ham . Bacon Pineapple . Black Olives

M 30cm
2 - 3 people

L 45cm
4 - 6 people

Additional Gourmet Toppings ¥220 per topping

Black & Green Marinated Olives . Semi-sundried Tomatoes . Prosciutto . Buffalo Mozzarella . Fresh Prawns . Grilled BBQ Ribs

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| | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| | |
| Tomato Cream, ¥1,400 | Bolognese, ¥1,400 |
| | |
| Carbonara, ¥1,400 | Feta & Olive, ¥1,400 |
| | |
| Siciliana, ¥1,400 | Garlic / Cheese Garlic ¥350 / ¥450 |

Salads & Sides

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| | | |
| Cesar, ¥1,000 | Caprese, ¥1,200 | Greek, ¥1,400 |
| | | |
| Fresh Focaccia | BBQ / Sweet-Chilli ¥900 (5 pieces) | |

...& more online!
Mozzarella Sticks; Fried Potato; BBQ Chicken & Sweet Chilli Chicken Wings (5 pieces); Calamari Rings...

Soft Drinks; Dessert Pizzas; Italian Wines...

NEW LOCATION

Visit us at our NEW LOCATION, in the J-Sekka building beside the traffic lights. Enjoy homemade pizza, pasta and succulent beef, pork and other meats from our new grill! See you soon!

On The Grill...

INTL' BEERS ON TAP

* REAL ESTATE NEWS // following the niseko market

NISEKO'S transformation into a mountain resort takes another step forward this winter, with the launch of two new luxury condominium developments by Australian and Hong Kong developers.



kizuna - cg image



kizuna - panorama // photo glen claydon

LOFT – EXQUISITELY CHIC LIFESTYLE

THE opportunity to secure a piece of middle Hirafu's bluff land with protected Mt Yotei panorama views rarely arises, yet Hong Kong developer Apex Property KK's Loft development has done just this.

Developer Sylvia Tang notes that, "after many seasons of holidaying in Niseko and falling in love with the place, we decided to create something unique and special called Loft. We chose this site because of its elevation; all Loft apartments from ground floor to the top floor have breathtaking, protected views of Mt Yotei, which no other condominium building in Hirafu has."

Loft's combination of chic urban luxury design, high ceilings, protected Mt Yotei views from every apartment and the on-site concierge service are sure to stand out

in Niseko's blossoming high-end condominium market.

Apex has collaborated with Riccardo Tossani Architecture's notable local experience to achieve a refined design that will meld a unique and stylish building into the local environment, and exploit the protected views and natural light available.

Loft will deliver six loft-style 1.5 to 3 bedroom apartments ranging between 60 to 127 sqm, each with 3 meter high ceilings, room wide floor-to-ceiling windows, and fitted-out with furniture and fixtures of the highest quality. Loft's sustainable design will produce a low carbon footprint using energy efficient equipment.

The level of chic style available at Loft will appeal to those seeking an investment opportunity offering full service exclusivity down to the finest detail.

KIZUNA – INTRODUCING HIRAFU'S NEWEST

The latest addition to popular Upper Hirafu is Kizuna. Kizuna's construction started in spring 2011, and the building is now close to completion with handover in January 2012.

Australian property developer VKH Pty Ltd, through its Japanese subsidiary Kizuna GK has engaged reknowned Sapporo architect MIES together with builders Ishizuka Kensetsu to do the construction.

"In Japanese, Kizuna means the bonds or ties that link us together. The whole aim of this project is to create luxury lifestyle apartments where people can enjoy Niseko together with family and friends," says developer Brendan Vote.

Kizuna consists of three 1-bedroom (from 47 to 56 sqm) and six 2-bedroom (68 to 93 sqm) apartments, with the 6th and 7th floors boasting an expansive 3-bedroom 132 sqm penthouse.

The design cleverly maximizes the use of space to capture and enhance stunning views of Mt Yotei and the surrounding Niseko area. "Kizuna's floor to ceiling picture windows are a highlight. Natural light provides a refreshing living environment year-round. Summer will also be fantastic." comments Vote.

Building on VKH's experience and portfolio of developments in New Zealand, Tasmania, and Vanuatu, Kizuna's ten exclusive apartments offer a year-round rental investment and lifestyle opportunity to those looking for a sophisticated acquisition option in prime position.

www.nisekorealestate.com



loft - cg image

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photo // yasu - niseko photography // location hirafu peak // rider unknown



niseko backcountry // skier kate kunkova

location



photo yasu - niseko photography // location hirafu // month dec // rider teruko



photo glen claydon // location hirafu // month dec // rider emily gattinger

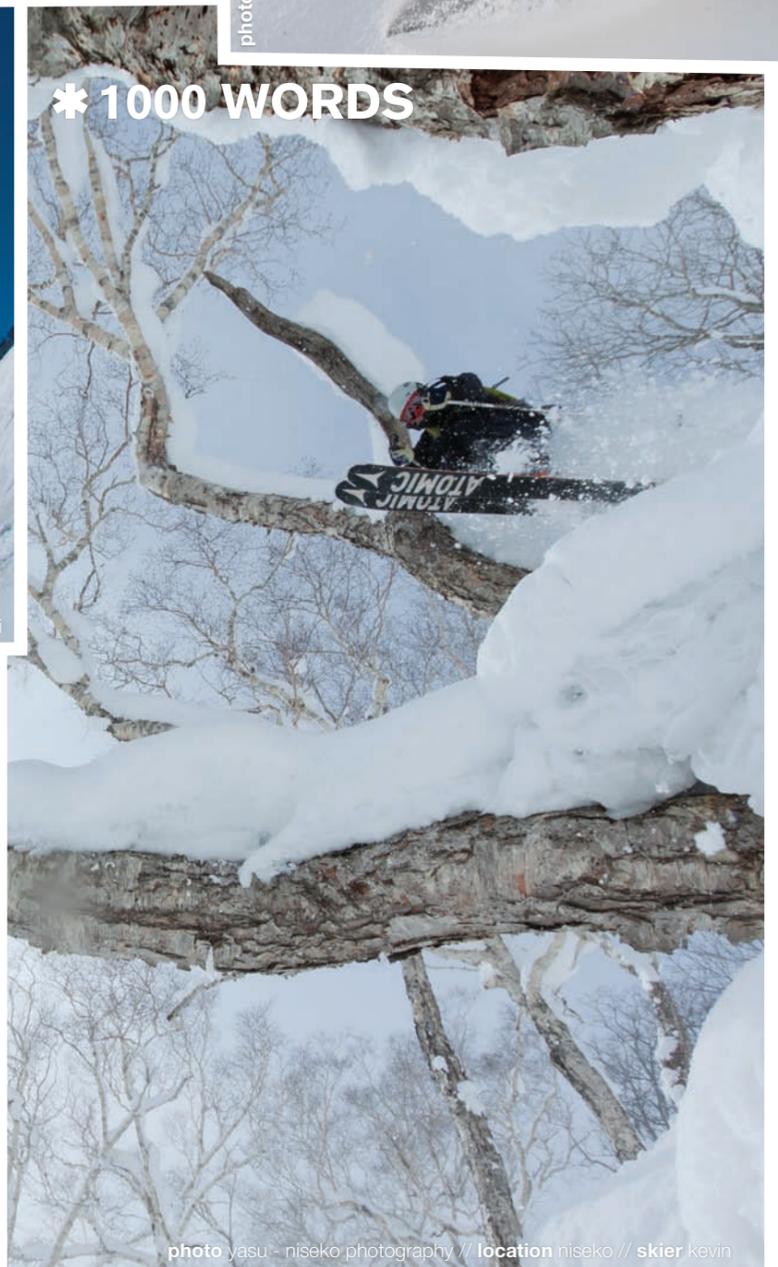


photo azza - niseko photography // location

photo // glen claydon // location hirafu // month dec // rider emily gattinger



photo yasu - niseko photography // location hirafu // skier yohei sasaki



* 1000 WORDS

photo yasu - niseko photography // location niseko // skier kevin



photo azza - niseko photography // location niseko backcountry // skier gus



photo yasu - niseko photography // location niseko backcountry // skier tom

* BACKCOUNTRY // stay safe on the mountain



photo // azza - niseko photography

Powderlife has compiled some top tips to keep you safe on the mountain.

1. If the backcountry's closed, it's for a reason! Learn and obey the Niseko Rules. They include limiting access to the out-of-bound areas and restricting entry during hazardous conditions.

2. Read and understand weather and avalanche reports posted in Japanese and English at entries and exits to the backcountry.

3. Know where the ski patrol is located. Once an incident gets to a certain level, know where to go and who to contact for help.

4. Let someone reliable know where you plan to go, your destination and what time you plan to be home.

5. Explore the backcountry with experienced and reliable people. The least experienced person in the group should still know what to do in case of emergency.

6. Make sure everyone is familiar with equipment, which should include a shovel, beacon and probe.

7. No-go areas include Yu no sawa (between Annupuri and Niseko Village), and Haru-no-taki (cliff area west of Hirafu). All no-go areas are well sign-posted and marked on resort maps.

8. We strongly suggest using a qualified guide, especially beginners.

9. Ducking ropes may result in you losing your lift pass.

10. Always remember YOU are responsible for your own decisions and safety.

Daily Avalanche Report
<http://niseko.nadare.info>

Powderlife's Backcountry Guide
www.powderlife.com
// 'Backcountry basics'
// 'Inside a 2-day avalanche course'
// 'Lost in the backcountry'
// 'How to build a snowcave'

WITH the pure adrenaline rush of riding through deep untouched powder, it is easy to forget that this exhilarating experience in the backcountry can quickly turn into a nightmare if you are not

prepared. Niseko has a liberal stance toward backcountry snowboarding and skiing, so you are the one who has to make responsible decisions. When venturing into unpatrolled areas, preparation is vital.

FREE BACKCOUNTRY INFORMATION SEMINAR //

Topics // Niseko Rules, safe backcountry travel, terrain evaluation & search techniques with the guides from Black Diamond Lodge.

Location // Black Diamond Tours head office (Niseko Village) - Catch the free shuttle bus to the Niseko Village area & get off at the Milk Kobo stop.

Time // 6-7pm every Tuesday during winter. First Session Dec. 20th

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RESORT GUIDE

POWDERLIFE is your Niseko Travel Guide – in print and online. With www.powderlife.com and *Powderlife* Niseko magazine, you'll discover the essential information for the perfect holiday.

During your stay, experience Niseko's restaurants, bars and cafés, where you can feast on anything – from the most authentic sushi to beautiful local sake. Make the most of your skiing and boarding with the specialist ski and snowboard stores and mountain guides around town. Inside you'll also find *Powderlife's* onsen guide, short history of the area and village maps. For everything else visit www.powderlife.com/niseko-resort-guide.



TOURIST INFO

Kutchan Information Centre

Plenty of brochures and English-speaking staff.
Location: Main Street, Kutchan (map p.53, A4)
T: (0136) 22 1121.

The Niseko Grand Hirafu Welcome Centre

Wide range of brochures from the area and transport information.
Location: Top of the main street (Hirafu Zaka) in Hirafu - Map: p.39, E1
T: (0136) 22 0109.

GETTING HERE & THERE

New Chitose Airport.

For departure and arrival times.
T: (0123) 23 0111
W: www.new-chitose-airport.jp/language/english

Getting from New Chitose to Niseko

Bus: This is a cheap and efficient option. Buses leave every 30 minutes from the airport to Niseko and take about three hours (includes rest stop and drop off at Rusutsu). Companies providing this service: Whiteliner Buses, Chuo Bus, Donan Bus and Hokkaido Resort Liner. Visit the Welcome Centre for bus bookings back to Chitose. ¥2,300 approx. (one way) or ¥3850 approx. (roundtrip).

Door-to-Door Transfer Skybus offers a door-to-door transfer service to and from the airport to Niseko, or Sapporo. See p.18 for details.
T: 0136 555 301
W: www.skybus.co.jp

Train This is the most scenic route to Niseko. There is no direct train from Chitose to Kutchan Station (closest major station to Hirafu), and all

trains run through Sapporo and Otaru. You will be required to change platforms. ¥2600 approx.

T: (0123) 45 7011 – Airport Station

T: (0136) 22 1310 – Kutchan station

W: www.japanrail.com

CAR RENTAL

Niseko Auto Rentals

Specialising in large 4wd 7-8 passenger vehicles: Delica Space Gear and Toyota Hiace.
T: (0136) 44 1144
W: www.bdlodge.com

Toyota Rent-a-Car ShinSapporo

One-way hire from Chitose to Hirafu is about ¥7000 for six people/24 hours. Pick up at Chitose airport, Sapporo or Kutchan
T: (0118) 15 0100 (English ok!)

The *Powderlife* website has some great tips on how to drive on snow as well as good contacts if you have an accident.
www.powderlife.com/niseko-travel-guide

TRANSPORT AROUND NISEKO

Taxis: Drivers probably won't speak English so you will need a business/place name and map for where you are going.
T: (0136) 22 1212 Kutchan Hire // (0136) 22 1171 Misora Hire // (0136) 44 2635 Niseko Hire.

Bus

Niseko United Shuttle: Connects Hirafu, Niseko Village and Annupuri resorts. Pickup/drop-off points in Hirafu include Hirafu Gondola and the bus stop near Hirafu intersection.

¥: Free if you have an all-mountain pass // 1 point if you have a 12-point mountain pass // ¥500 Adult and ¥300 for child.

Grand Hirafu Village shuttle bus:

Shuttle buses run throughout Hirafu every 15 minutes, all day, every day, until the end of night-skiing.
¥: Free

Hanazono Shuttle bus:

Travels throughout Hirafu Village and out to Hanazono from 7.50am to 6pm. Look out for the blue buses.
¥: Free

Kutchan Night Go bus:

Runs to and from Hirafu to Kutchan Station every night. ¥: ¥200 for 1 week pass/¥500 for a season pass.

MONEY

ATM Locations

Hokkaido Tracks Holiday's Office, Hirafu
Map: p.39, E2
Accepts: All major cards

Kutchan Main Post Office
Map: p.39, E3
Accepts: All major cards

7 Eleven
Map: p.39, C1
Accepts: Visa Plus, JCB, AMEX, Dinners Club, Discover, China Union Pay

Credit Cards Lift tickets, ski hire and ski lessons can all be paid for by credit. Most large restaurants offer credit card facilities too, however some small businesses are cash only. Check with your retailer before purchasing.

Currency Exchange Kutchan Post Office and Hokuyo Bank - Map: p.39, B3

SHOPPING

For everything from toothpaste to alcohol and late-night snacks try:

Hirafu

Seicomart – Map: p.39, D3

Lawson (24 hours) – Map: p.39, E3

Piz Gloria – Map: p.39, D2

Alpen Hotel – offer a smaller range of snacks and drinks. Map: p.39, E1

Sekka Deli – gourmet items from Hokkaido. Map: p.39, F2

Niseko

Maeda Shoten near the Post Office in Niseko, is a superette and liquor store.

Hanajizou Bakery sell fresh bread and pastries in store on Tuesday every week.

Kutchan

For a big shopping trip, it's worth venturing into Kutchan Town.

Homac for household products.

Map: p.39, G3

MaxValu for all your food supplies.

Map: p.39, G3

Best Denki for all your electrical and technical needs. Map: p.39, C4

M-Pocket for imported groceries and alcohol. Map: p.39, A3

¥100 store if you're on a budget. Map: p.39, B4

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Internet

J-Sekka Deli and Downtown Café have free Internet terminals.

Mobile Phones

Only 3G phones will work in Japan. Some accommodation providers offer mobile phone hire.

Domestic Calls

Green and grey public phones take coins or pre-paid telephone cards. Local calls don't require the '0136', unless made from a public telephone.

International Calls

Dial (010) and then the code of the country you wish to call. If the number starts with 0 – drop the 0 and dial everything else.

POST OFFICE

Look for the red '〒' symbol. There are three post offices in Kutchan and two in Niseko town. In Hirafu, post-office services are available at Piz Gloria and Seicomart.

ELECTRICITY

Standard voltage is 100v AC. You can use most electronic items without a problem, but some high watt devices such as hairdryers may not run on full power. Plugs are the international standard (flat, two-blade type).

MEDICAL SERVICES

Kutchan Kousei Hospital

No appointment necessary.

Map: p.39, A3

T: 0136 22 1141

Niseko Physio

The only acute sports injury specialist in the village.

Map: p.39, B2

T: 0136 22 0399

Tsuruha Drug (red signage) pharmacy.

Map: Route 5 and Route 343. (p.39, G3)

STAY SAFE AROUND TOWN

Non skiing/boarding on roads or footpaths

While it may seem much quicker and easier than walking, skiing and snowboarding home from the hill is dangerous and is frowned upon by locals.

One third of all injuries in Hirafu are caused by people falling on the street. Wear shoes with a good grip or buy and attach rubber sole cleats with metal studs.

Be careful when walking or parking your car under roofs

Heavy snow slides from rooftops in Niseko. The snow slides can seriously damage your cars too.

Drinking Dangers

Make sure you leave the bar with someone else. Also make sure you rug up and stay warm – people have been known to fall asleep in the snow on the way home. If you do notice someone who is intoxicated, report them to the police or the safety hut located outside Seicomart.

RUBBISH GUIDE

What is burnable rubbish? (燃えるゴミmoeru-gomi) Contrary to what most of us are brought up to believe, burnable rubbish includes plastics, as well as paper and food scraps.

PET bottles and cans (ペット、缶)

Plastic drink bottles (with lid/label removed) and aluminium/steel drink cans

Compost (生ゴミ nama-gomi)

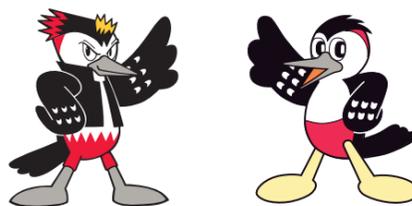
When available, compost bins are for food scraps. Though be careful, tea bags are not considered compost.

Non-burnable rubbish (燃えないゴミ moenai-gomi)

Non-burnable rubbish is for rubbish that doesn't fit the other categories, including items such as broken glass, ceramics and metals.

What can you do to help keep Niseko beautiful?

Take a second to be sure you're throwing your garbage in the correct bin. For more information visit www.town.kutchan.hokkaido.jp www.town.niseko.lg.jp



Niseko Town mascots Anniky and Nicky (above) are two brothers based on the Great Spotted Woodpecker - Akagera - that lives in the Niseko area and can be seen on a regular basis.



Kutchan Town mascots: Little fat skiing potato boy Jagatakun and his snowboarding girlfriend Jagako (above).

ONSEN GUIDE

Powderlife's guide and onsen (hot spring) etiquette tips will help you fall in love with this quintessential Japanese experience.

Yukoro Onsen

T: 0136 23 3434 (Hirafu map p.39 B4)

Hotel Niseko Alpen

T: 0136 22 1105 (Hirafu map p.39 E1)

Hilton Niseko Village

T: 0136 44 1111 (Higashiyama map p.39 G7)

Green Leaf Hotel Niseko Village

T: 0136 44 3311 (Higashiyama map p.39 G7)

Niseko Grand Hotel

T: 0136 58 2121 (Annupuri map p.39 A8)

Kanro no mori - (private onsen available)

T: 0136 58 3800 (Annupuri map p.39, A7)

Niseko Kira no yu (infront of Niseko Station)

T: 0136 44 1100 (private onsen available)

ONSEN ETIQUETTE

What to bring?

Bath towel, modesty towel and toiletries. Most onsens provide body soap and shampoo, and sell modesty towels for about ¥200.

How much?

Most onsens range between ¥600 to ¥1000.

What to do?

1. Enter the changing room through the appropriate door: 女 for women, 男 for men.
2. Remove your clothes and put them in the basket or locker provided.
3. Have a shower before entering the onsen. Rinse yourself thoroughly and then your shower cubicle before going into the onsen.
4. Use the modesty towel when walking into the onsen then gracefully slide into the water – never jump.
5. Don't let your towel enter the onsen water – just rest it on your head or on a rock on the side of the onsen.
6. Soak, contemplate and relieve your sore muscles.
7. Dry yourself off before going back into the change room, as best you can.

Many onsens have rooms where you can relax, drink a cold beer or tea, or even sit in a massage chair.

LOCAL HISTORY

WHAT does Niseko mean?

'Niseko' was the name originally given to the area by the Ainu, Hokkaido's indigenous people, and means 'a cliff jutting over a riverbank deep in the mountains'. Nupuri is the Ainu word for 'mountain'. Put it all together and Mt Niseko Annupuri (the mountain that is home to the Niseko United resorts) means 'a mountain which has sheer cliffs and a river below'. Other nearby mountains which have carried their Ainu names until today include Chisenupuri and Iwaonupuri.

SKI RESORT HISTORY

| | |
|------|--|
| 1911 | Theodore von Lerch ascends Mount Yotei |
| 1949 | Mount Yotei is designated a National Park |
| 1956 | Rope tow installed at Asahigaoka ski area |
| 1961 | First ski lift in Grand Hirafu ski area |
| 1962 | 40th All Japan Ski Championships (Alpine) |
| 1963 | Niseko mountain range is designated a Quasi-National Park |
| 1966 | Taiheiyo Club Niseko Moiva International ski area opens |
| 1970 | Kutchan hosts the 25th National Ski Competition |
| 1972 | Niseko Annupuri ski area opens |
| 1982 | Niseko Higashiyama ski area (currently Niseko Village) opens |
| 1993 | Free Passport lift pass system valid at 4 ski resorts introduced |
| 2002 | Niseko starts to receive a large number of Australian tourists |
| 2011 | 100 years of skiing in Hokkaido and 50 years of ski operation in Hirafu. |

Information courtesy of the Niseko Promotion Board

LOCAL LINGO

GREETINGS

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Good morning | Ohaiyogozaimasu |
| Hello | Konichiwa |
| Good evening | Kon ban wa |
| Goodnight | Oyasuminasai |
| Goodbye | Sayonara |
| See you later | Mata ne |
| What's your name? | Onamae wa nan desu ka? |
| My name is ... | Watashi no namae wa (insert name) desu |
| (nice to meet you) | Dozo yoroshiku |
| How are you? | Genki desu ka? |
| I'm fine | Genki desu |
| How old are you? | Otoshi wa Ikutsu desu ka? |

BASIC QUESTIONS

| | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Where is ...? | ... wa doko desu ka? |
| toilet | toire |
| Are you okay? | Daijoubu desu ka? |

RESTAURANT TIPS

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| How many people? | Nan mei sama desu ka? |
| two people | 'ni' mei desu |
| (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) | (san, yon, go, roku, shichi, hachi) |
| What would you like to drink? | Onomimono wa okimari desu ka? |
| One beer please | biiru 'hitotsu' kudasai |
| Food counters | |
| one | hitotsu |
| two | futatsu |
| three | mitsu |
| four | yotsu |
| Before you eat say | Itadakimasu |
| After you eat say | Gochisosamadeshita |
| Cheers | Kanpai |
| Delicious | Oiishi |

OUT AND ABOUT

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Great snow | Sugoi yuki |
| Excuse me | Sumimasen |
| I don't understand | Nihongo ga wakarimasen |
| Japanese | Eigo ga hanasemasu ka? |
| Do you speak English? | Kawaii |
| Cute | Nihon wa sugoi |
| Japan's great! | |

C2 **A-Bu-Cha 2**
 p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

Try our popular Japanese dishes or hot-pots. Choice of over 400 drinks! Mouth-watering Home-made sweets. Take away menu is available. Authentic Japanese seating. Families are welcome.



6pm - 2am
 Food (L.O) 11.30pm
 ☎ 0136 22 5620

A wide variety of meals and drinks - top marks

www.abucha.net

E3 **Barunba**
 p.39 MIDDLE VILLAGE

Barunba is a little bar situated on Momiji street. Enjoy your time with local skiers and snowboarders. Have a drink with us, and enjoy our funky, small bar atmosphere here in Niseko!



Open 7 Days
 8pm-3am
 ☎ 0136 55 5615

HAI-CARUMBA! Bar BARUNBA!

C3 **Cocoro Okonomiyaki**
 p.38 KUTCHAN

Real Osaka-style okonomiyaki and yakisoba cooked by you on your teppan (hot plate). Try our takoyaki (octopus) and chicken balls. Japanese sweets also available.



11am - 8.30pm (LO)
 ☎ 0136 22 1528

Great Food, Great Value!

B3 **Downtown Café**
 p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Downtown Café is open from 7:30am-9:30pm for breakfast, lunch, dinner and takeaways. Locally sourced and organic produce. A great place to relax, be warm and watch the snow.



Open 7 days
 8am to 9.30pm
 Breakfast, lunch and dinner
 ☎ 0136 23 3354

We have a warm, cosy atmosphere with coffee & cakes

D2 **Bang Bang**
 p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

Ramen lunch at Bang 2 starting this season! We take great pride in our fresh seafood and look forward to offering you mouthwatering dishes from our wide-ranging menus.



Lunch 11am - 4pm
 Dinner 5.30pm - 11.30 pm
 Occasionally closed
 ☎ 0136 22 4292

www.niseko.or.jp/bangbang

We take great pride in our fresh seafood

E7 **Black Diamond Restaurant**
 p.38 HIGASHIYAMA

Offering a wide variety of food and drink from around the world. Japanese daily specials, Western, Mexican and Italian dishes! Billiards, darts, happy hour and drink specials daily! Free pickup from The Hilton and The Green Leaf for groups of 6 or more.



4pm-midnight
 (LO 11pm food // 11.30pm drink)
 ☎ 0136 44 1144

www.bdlodge.com

Free pick-up from The Hilton and The Green Leaf for 6 or more

D3 **Dining Sou**
 p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Try our popular Japanese nabe hotpot and experience Japanese culture. We recommend Sukiyaki, Shabushabu and Kimuchi hotpots to warm your body up in the cold Niseko winter. Lunch available (no nabe) with reservation, Shabushabu, Sukiyaki or Kimuchi hotpot course from 11am to 2pm. Lunch: ¥1050 - Dessert plate: ¥400



Dinner 6-11pm
 Lunch 11am to 2pm
 7 days until end of Feb.
 ☎ 0136 23 3048

Definitely hot pot in Winter! Best ingredients from Hokkaido

A4 **Ebisutei**
 p.39 LOWER HIRAFU

Finished skiing? Drop in for great food and a good time! Laugh and drink at this lively izakaya inn. Enjoy our assorted Japanese hotchpotch.



Open daily
 5pm - midnight
 ☎ 0136 22 6544

www.ebcb.com

Have fun with our genki and laughing oden bar staff

D2 **GLOORIOUS Coffee**
 p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

Located inside the Rhythm shop, serving take away premium LAVAZZA coffee. Be sure to drop in and enjoy a delicious brew each morning before you hit the slopes. And for those of you with a sweeter tooth, trying our decadent hot chocolate is a must!



Open daily
 8pm-4pm

www.facebook.com/GloriousCoffee

"it's the best coffee in town!" Point card - 6th coffee FREE!

☎ 0136 23 0164

C4 **Half Note**
 p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Enjoy live weekend jazz nights as well as Dancing and other live music on weekdays. With jazz, billiards and table tennis, there's always something going on at Half Note. Check out Half Note's regular jazz events at www.nisekohalfnote.com.



6pm-midnight
 Open daily

www.nisekohalfnote.com

Hirafu's only jazz bar!

☎ 0136 23 2727

C3 **Kabuki 1 and 2**
 p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

A choice of make-it-yourself or a full service Teppan Yaki restaurant. At Kabuki 1 you can make-it-yourself Okonomiyaki and Teppanyaki. Kabuki 2 (next door) is a full-service Teppan Yaki Restaurant. Early bird 20% for all meals - in by 6pm out by 7pm



Open 7 days
 5-11pm
 ☎ 0136 21 2233 (Kabuki 1)
 ☎ 0136 21 2121 (Kabuki 2)

www.nisekokabuki.com

Okonomiyaki and Teppanyaki Restaurants

E8 **M's Café (Saison Club)**
 p.38 HIGASHIYAMA

Try our huge traditional Japanese nabe hotpots with meat, seafood and vegetables. We have shabu shabu and sukiyaki.



Day 10am-3pm
 Evening 5.00-9.00pm
 LO (8pm)
 ☎ 0136 44 3380

www.saison-club.com

Warm your body with our big hearty hot-pots

www.powderlife.com

B3 **GYU+ (A.K.A The Fridge)**
 p.39 LOWER HIRAFU

Gyu + (aka Fridge Door) has been open for over 10 years serving single malt whiskeys, hot cocktails and a long menu of original drinks.



Open 7 Days
 6pm-1am
 (L.O 12.30am)
 ☎ 0136 23 1432

www.gyubar.com

Hand Selected Vinyl Records, Cocktails & Rare Japanese Whiskey.

B3 **J-Sekka Café and Delicatessen**
 p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

For a hearty breakfast to get you ready for the slopes, great coffee and winter warmers to power you through the day or a lazy afternoon spent discovering the delicious Hokkaido produce used in our house-made delicacies.



open from 7am daily

www.j-sekka.com

A taste of Hokkaido

☎ 0136 21 3088

E2 **Kamimura**
 p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

Trained by one of the world's top chefs, Tetsuya Wakuda, chef Kamimura uses the abundance of Hokkaido produce to create a memorable degustation dining experience.



Dinner 6pm - 11pm
 Occasionally closed

www.kamimura-niseko.com

Blessed by land, sea and a creative chef

☎ 0136 21 2288

B4 **Manpukutei**
 p.39 LOWER VILLAGE

2nd season for Korean restaurant, Manpukutei with new menu. Come in after a day of pow and have a great time at Manpukutei in Niseko!!



6pm-11pm

Pick up service is available!!

☎ 0136 21 7880

B3 Maki Lounge
p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

With an open fire and sweeping views of the Hirafu ski hill, unwind on our leather lounges. Apres drinks include an array of fine Japanese whiskey, sake, shochu and plum wine as well as classic and house-blend cocktails, spirits and glass wine.



Coffee, snacks and games from 10am // bar 2pm-late 7 days
☎ 0136 21 6133

Japanese whiskey, sake and shochu by the fire

www.j-sekka.com

C3 Niseko Pizza
p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Visit us at our NEW LOCATION, in the J-Sekka building beside the traffic lights. Enjoy home-made pizza, pasta and succulent beef, pork and other meats from our new grill!



Open 5-11pm weekdays 11am to 11pm weekends, holidays, Chinese New year
☎ 0136 55 5553

Dine in, Take-away and delivery

www.nisekopizza.jp

B1 Restaurant LUPICIA Niseko
p.39 KABAYAMA

LUPICIA offers fine dining experience in Niseko. A modern fusion of European and Japanese cuisine. Enjoy our sommelier recommended wine: French Chateaus and Domains, Australian favorites, and LUPICIA's reserved wine "LA MEIGE VIERGE". Open daily (Winter season)



Lunch 11:30am-2pm
Tea Time 2-4pm
Dinner 5pm - 10pm
☎ 0136 21 7880

Euro-Japanese cuisine to accent the Hokkaido ingredients

www.lupicia.com

D3 Splash Bar Niseko
p.39 MIDDLE VILLAGE

It's party night!! Pool table, darts and yummy drinks. Locals' favorite bar is now equipped with a big screen TV!!



Winter Only - Open Daily 4pm-1am
Happy Hour 4pm-7pm
☎ 080 6096 0698

Upcoming exciting events. Ask our friendly staff for details.

www.splashbarniseko.com

C3 Niseko So-an Yakiniku Restaurant
p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Tasty meat & cold beer! Ideal for groups. Enquire about large group reservations, FREE pick-up service is available. ¥1700 all-you-can-eat BBQ for 60 minutes.



Open daily 11am-3pm (LO 2pm) 5pm - 11pm (LO 10.30am)
☎ 090 2059 6701

¥1700 all-you-can-eat barbecue for 60 minutes

www.nisekosoan.net

D2 Paddy McGinty's Irish Pub & Restaurant
p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

Enjoy your perfect powder holiday at our popular pub and restaurant with its welcoming fun atmosphere, imported and local beers, wines, spirits and great value meals.



Open daily 1pm till Late
☎ 0136 55 8020

Value Drinks, Hearty Meals, Live Sports and Music

www.paddymcginthispub.com

C3 Steak Rosso Rosso
p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Casual steak house with a contemporary flavour. Juicy, tender wagyu and Kobe beef and a variety of imported wines. Enjoy yourself to satiation with our stylish cuisine and refined hospitality.



Dinner 6pm-11pm
Occasionally closed
☎ 0136 21 7100

A must for steak lovers!

www.rossorosso.net

na Sumibi Yakiniku Kurobeko
KUTCHAN

Located on Route 5, catch the Kutchan Night-Go Bus to Keizai Center bus stop. It's a 2-min walk from there. Try the best Authentic Yakiniku!



Closed Tuesday 5pm - 11.30pm (L.O)
☎ 0136 22 2020

50 seats are available. Groups are welcome.

www.powderlife.com

F3 Taj Mahal
p.39 IZUMIKYO 1

Enjoy the best of Indian traditional cuisine & courtesy service. Experience Indian meals with Indian beers & wines at our prestigious restaurant. vegetarians meals are also available. 10% discount on takeout orders. Free local delivery.



Open all year, 7 days 11.30am to 10.30pm
☎ 0136 22 4566

Dine in, take-away & delivery

www.tajmahalgroup.com

D2 Tozanken Asahikawa Ramen
p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

Asahikawa ramen is made from 100% Hokkaido wheat noodles served in a smooth and rich soup. There is a wide selection of dishes to choose from including Donburi rice bowls. From Asahikawa's original ramen restaurant.



Open 7 days 11.00am-11.30pm (LO 11pm)
☎ 0136 23 4549

Try Asahikawa Ramen with Gyoza

www.powderlife.com

B2 Wabi Sabi Café
p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Great Value, Healthy Japanese Café. Wabi Sabi Café. We serve Donburi, a classic Rice Bowl cuisine & Cakes, Coffee and Chai. Free WiFi, Daily Specials. 10% Discount will apply between 12pm & payment & departure before 7pm.



Open 7 days 12 Midday -10pm
☎ 0136 21 5115

Specialty Donburi Rice Bowl Lunch & Dinner Café

www.nisekowabisabi.com

E2 Wild Bills
p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

We offer a great selection of Japanese izakaya style food in the warm log house setting. Late night a sure spot for a good party!



Open 7 days 5pm-Late
☎ 0136 55 5774

Come and enjoy our great food and music.

www.powderlife.com

C3 The Barn
p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Come and enjoy our alpine food and wine in Hokkaido's warmest and authentic bistro atmosphere. Drop in on the way back from the slopes for a snack and hot wine in our friendly bar on the upper floor, or stay the evening for dinner in the main restaurant.



Open 7 days 6pm to late (LO 9.30pm food // drinks 11.30pm)
☎ 0136 23 0888

Hokkaido's one and only alpine bistro

www.nisekobarn.com

C2 VBG - Vale Bar and Grill
p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

This year the VBG has taken a step forward with a menu based around a modern French Steakhouse with a wine list to match. The slow roast beef steak is a must try and the 1945 fortified Grenache is an experience of a lifetime. Open from breakfast through to late night.



Open 7 days 7am to late All-day dining
☎ 0136 21 5833

The VBG is a casual flavoured field dining highlight.

www.nisekoalpineaccommodation.com

B2 Wabi Sabi Express
p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Delivery and Take Out. Japanese Rice bowl (Donburi) 1pm - 10pm Daily specials, Salads, Drinks all Delivered. 10% off for Takeout before 7pm. Online Orders given priority.



Eat In & Take Out 12 Midday - 10pm
Delivery: 1pm - 10pm
☎ 0136 21 5115

Original Japanese Delivery & Take Out Service

www.nisekowabisabi.com

D4 Yummy's
p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Cesar Salad, Avocado Salsa Salad, Chicken Wings, Bacon Pepper Steak, Baked Cream Potato, Cheese Fondue, wines and of course various styles of pizza. And more more!



Yummy homemade crust pizza and western foods restaurant

www.yummypizza.com

5-11pm daily Delivery available in the Hirafu area
☎ 0136 21 2239

TOURS & ACTIVITIES

F8 Black Diamond Tours

p.38 NISEKO VILLAGE - HIGASHIYAMA

Check out Niseko's incredible backcountry or visit Rusutsu, Sapporo Kokusai or Teine Highland. We also have a range of backcountry tours to suit your lung capacity.



8am-8pm daily
In Niseko Village
across from Milk Kobo
☎ 090 2054 8687

www.blackdiamondtours.com

Niseko's backcountry powder specialists

D2 Japanese Cultural Tours

p.39 HIRAFU

Tours will take you to various cultural attractions in Kutchan: Tea ceremony, laid sword demo, Taiko drums, sake-brewery tour and Japanese dinner. ¥5000/¥3000. Departs from Niseko Hirafu Safety & Information Center (Seicomart) ends in Kutchan.



3.00-7.30pm
Bookings essential
☎ 0136 23 0222

Tour Dates: 28 Dec, 8 Jan, 20 Jan, 3 Feb, 17 Feb
www.kutchan-town-st.com/mailjapan.htm

Reservation is required. Experience Japanese Culture !

E1 Niseko Foot

p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

Visit this popular relaxation salon and sample some of our many treatments at Aplen Hotel 1F and B1F. All different styles of massage are available for body and feet. 30-minutes, 60-minutes and 90-minutes courses are available. Groups are welcomed. Osteopathy and sports injuries are offered.



Open daily
11am-10pm
Free pickup available
☎ 0136 22 1224

www.grand-hirafu.jp/nisekofoot

Closest healing relaxation therapy spot to Centre 4 lift

F1 NISS

p.39 HIRAFU AND HANAZONO 308

Let our instructors inspire you on your Hanazono/Hirafu snow holiday. With two great locations and a suite of programs we'll help you learn new skills, gain confidence and above all enjoy your time in the powder of Niseko. Hanazono 308, Hirafu Kogen, Fusion Hirafu, The Vale Snowsports.



8.00am-9.00pm
☎ 0136 21 6688

www.hanazononiseko.com

Kids are our speciality Hanazono and Hirafu

E2 Deep Powder Tours Ski Holidays

p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

A licensed I.A.T.A international travel agent. Check out our website for a broad overview of the many ski resorts in Japan that we offer.



www.deeppowdertours.com

B3 Niseko Photography Tours

p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Professional photography and video services. From the deepest powder pics to group tours and family shots - Niseko Photography are the local professionals. Book a private tour and we will capture your priceless holiday memories while you and your friends or family cruise the mountain.



Available Everyday
Call to book
☎ 0136 22 5764

www.nisekophotography.com

Niseko's professional photographers

B2 Niseko Physio & Massage

p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Australian trained physiotherapists specialising in knees, and all snow sports injuries. Serving Niseko since 2006 and in Tokyo since 2002. We also operate Niseko Massage, oil sports and relaxation massages from ¥6,000 per hour.



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www.nisekophysio.com
www.nisekomassage.com

Niseko's injury centre also providing sports & relaxation massage

E3 NOASC

p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

NOASC is Niseko's premier winter adventure company. We offer ski school (skiing/snowboarding/telemarking) lessons for kids through to advanced skiers, powder lessons, mountain guiding, snowshoe tours, CAT skiing, Niseko Explorer Private tours, kids adventure school, and backcountry tours.



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All year round
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www.noasc.com

Just Do It adventure tours - an experience you won't forget

RETAIL & SHOPPING

F5 Hana Jizoh

p.39 IZUMIKYO 2

Amazing sweet and savoury breads and pastries from a friendly local family baker. You must try this! Get the free Hirafu Village shuttle to bus stop 27, near Unitas Log Village. Eat in or takeaway.



8.00am - 4.30pm
Closed Wed & Thurs.
☎ 0136 23 0331

Creative and delicious breads from a local baker

D1 Fusion

p.39 UPPER HIRAFU/HANAZONO

Try on the latest gear from popular brands like Burton, Volcom, Orage and The North Face. Stop into our main Hirafu shop for a complete selection of the Vale and Hanazono locations for any on-snow accessories.



Hirafu 8am-9pm
The Vale 8am-9pm
Hanazono 8.30am-5pm
☎ 0136 21 6633

www.hanazononiseko.com

Prepare for the pow with the latest gear at Fusion

E3 Niseko Cultural School & Momiji Gallery

p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Small classes of tea ceremony, calligraphy, Japanese cooking: sushi/sukiyaki/hotpot, bamboo painting & cultural tours. ¥4,000 to ¥10,000. Perfect on your own or with friends. No kids under 12. Bookings at Momiji Art Gallery & Japanese gift shop on ground floor.



Open 7 days
1.00pm-7.00pm
☎ 0136 55 8585

www.nisekoculturalschool.com

Learn & experience Japanese Culture in Hirafu

D2 Yukara

p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

Stocking a wide variety of souvenirs, original t-shirts, Hokkaido sweets and more. Remember your holiday and take home a souvenir with you and share with your family and friends.



7 days
9am-10pm
0136 23 4546

Reopened in 2010 on 2nd floor of Tozanken Asahikawa Ramen

E2 Mariposa

p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

Sweet Muffin, Savory Muffin and Scones. Delicious Bread available on Thursdays. Cream puff also available on weekends. Enjoy our delicious, freshly baked muffins & scones, homemade daily from a selection of over 50 of our favorite recipes.



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☎ 0136 22 5677

www.mariposa.asia

Delicious muffins, scones and soup

D3 Mountainshop Niseko 343

p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Best item selections in Niseko Satisfaction is guaranteed for any skiers to have a great time in Niseko. FAT SKI rental for powder snow has variety selection. Rental delivery and pick up service is available.



Daily
9am-9pm in winter
☎ 0136 23 0343

www.niseko343.com

NISEKO+343 =200%FUN

B3 Niseko Photography Gallery

p.39 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Stunning limited edition prints and fine art canvas works. Niseko Photographie's gallery, located in Niseko Cellars, is a showcase of beautiful photography from Niseko's stunning 4 seasons. Prints available in quality frames, or unframed for easy travel.



Open Daily
Midday - 10.00pm
☎ 0136 22 5764

www.nisekophotography.com

Photo gallery - fine-art prints and souvenirs

D2 Sakura

p.39 UPPER HIRAFU

Tucked in behind Paddy McGinty's, Sakura offers a wide selection of gifts including kimonos, geisha hairpins, pottery, paintings, traditional wooden furniture and more.



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1-7pm in winter
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www.sakura-niseko.com

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D2 Glen Claydon Photography

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E3 Niseko Realty Sales

Dealing in real-estate sales, property management, and holiday lettings. Our staff are native to the area and know the property market. For trustworthy advice, sales, accommodation contact us at 0136-23-2221, info@nisekorealty.com, or drop by our Hirafu office across from the SPLASH bar.



8:00am to 7:00pm
All year round

Secure your future in Japan's premier powder ski area

☎ 0136 23 2221

D1 Demo Equipment Hire

Situated in three areas, Hirafu main village, The Vale, and Hanazono, Demo offers the latest equipment with the flexibility of renting, exchanging, and returning at any location.



www.hanazononiseko.com

Multiple locations, wide equipment range, endless possibilities

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The Vale 8am-9pm
Hanazono 8.30am-5pm
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C3 Hermosa Angel Massage

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www.inkarebaza.com

Relax and rejuvenate in the heart of hirafu

Open 7 days
Appointments available from 11am-midnight
☎ 0136 23 2004

F7 Niseko Auto Rentals and Sales

Complement your holiday or home with a 4WD vehicle. Local licensed dealer offering affordable rentals and sales IN ENGLISH. Short and long-term rentals available. English navigation available.



www.nisekoauto.com

4WD vans from ¥46,200/week or ¥135,000/month

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24hr Emergency English
Roadside Assistance
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D2 Travelplan

Australia's #1 snow holiday specialist with 41 years' experience, offering a wide selection of pensions, hotels and quality apartments in Niseko and other resorts. CMH Heli Skiing in Canada - information night every Wednesday 4th Jan-8th Feb. For more information contact Travelplan.



www.travelplanski.com

The world's best ski holidays

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8am-12pm
3pm-7pm
☎ 0136 21 5354

www.powderlife.com

NISEKO UNITED.



Niseko Rules

The Niseko Rules are Niseko's official regulations created for the safety and freedom of everyone using the ski resort and riding beyond the ski area boundary.

- CERTAIN CLOSED AREAS WITHIN NISEKO ARE STRICTLY OFF LIMIT AND ARE NOT TO BE ENTERED AT ANY TIME** - Snow/Gully between Amururi and Niseko Village area and Hirafu no Tabi cliff area west of Hirafu are "STRICTLY OFF LIMIT AREAS" as stated by the Niseko Rules. Those riding these areas WILL have their lift pass confiscated.
- CROSSING ROPES IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED** - The boundary ropes is prohibited. If you do your lift pass will be confiscated. Use ONLY designated gates to access out of bounds areas. Crossing ropes at other areas will result in lift pass confiscation.
- NO SAFETY CONTROL BEYOND RESORT BOUNDARY** - The area outside the mountain resort boundaries (back country, including the peak) are supervised by the resort or the Ski Patrol. Niseko Rules prohibit that taking and riding these areas is dangerous and if you choose to, you do it AT YOUR OWN RISK.
- BACK COUNTRY SKIING/RIDING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED** - During extremely hazardous conditions, access gates will be closed and out of bounds riding will be strictly prohibited.
- AVAILANCHE CONDITION INFORMATION** - The "Niseko Avalanche Information" is the official information posted by "Niseko Avalanche Institute". This information can be found at lift stations, access gates and on the Internet.
- BACK COUNTRY RESCUE FEE** - YOU are responsible for the cost of your rescue from back country areas.
- NO ALCOHOL IN HIRAFU** - INSTRUCTIONS MUST BE OBEYED

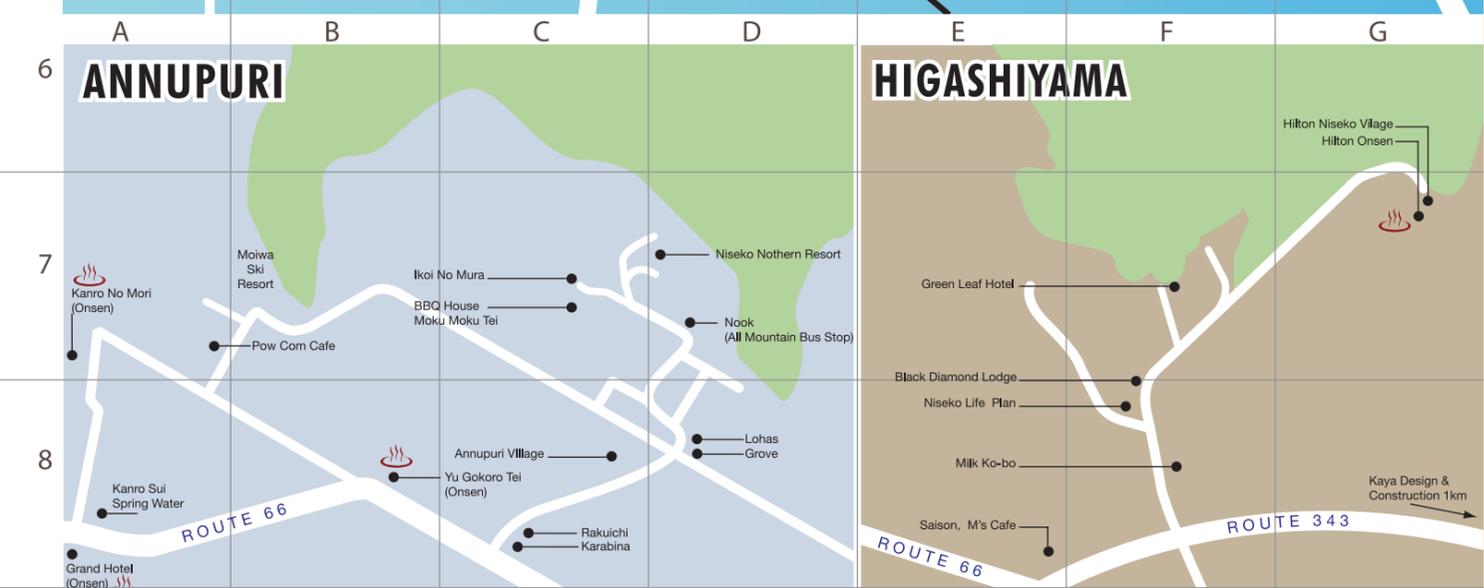
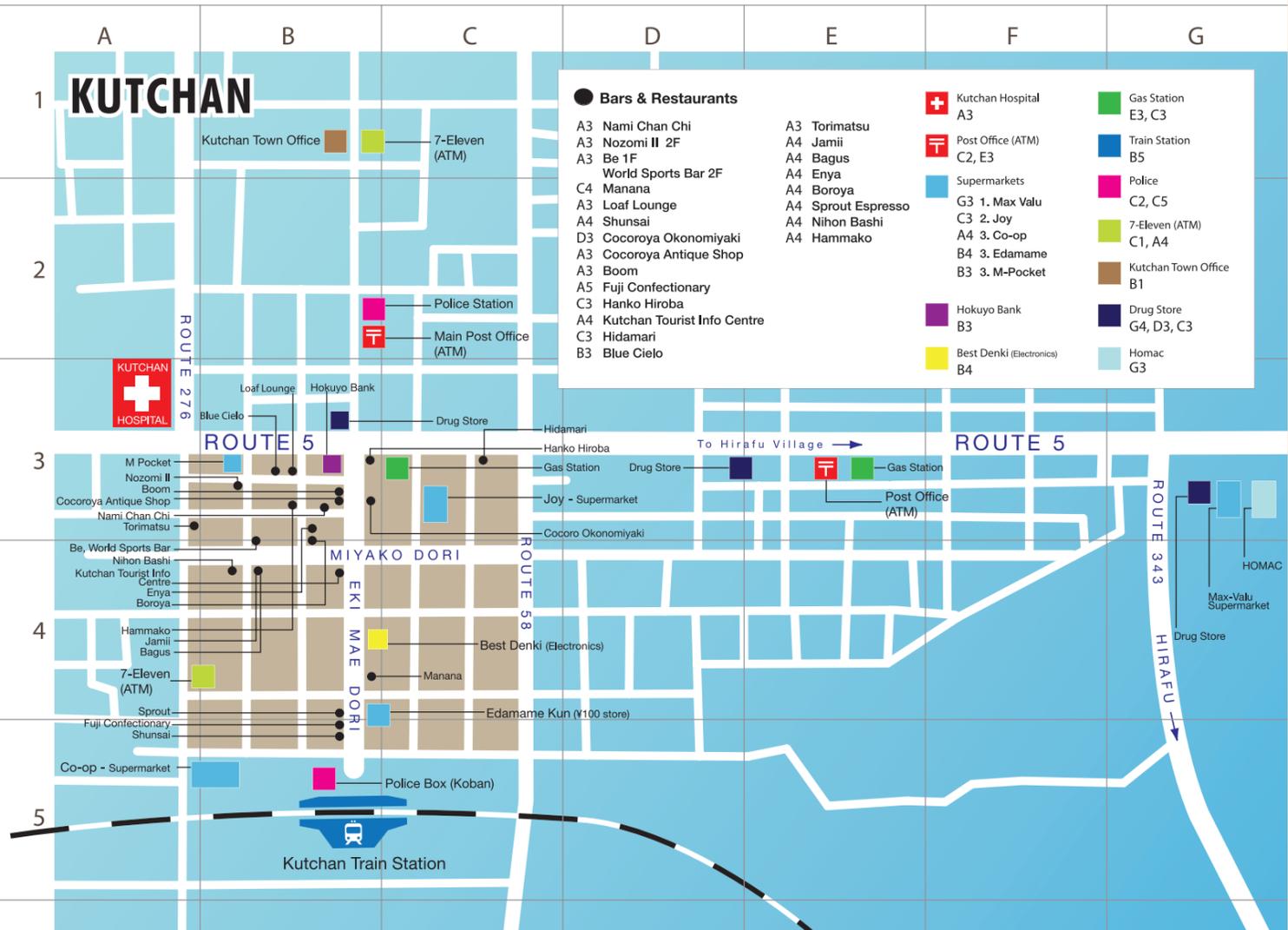
Avalanche Control Operation Area

Various methods of Avalanche Control are in use in this area in the interest of increasing avalanche awareness and safety.

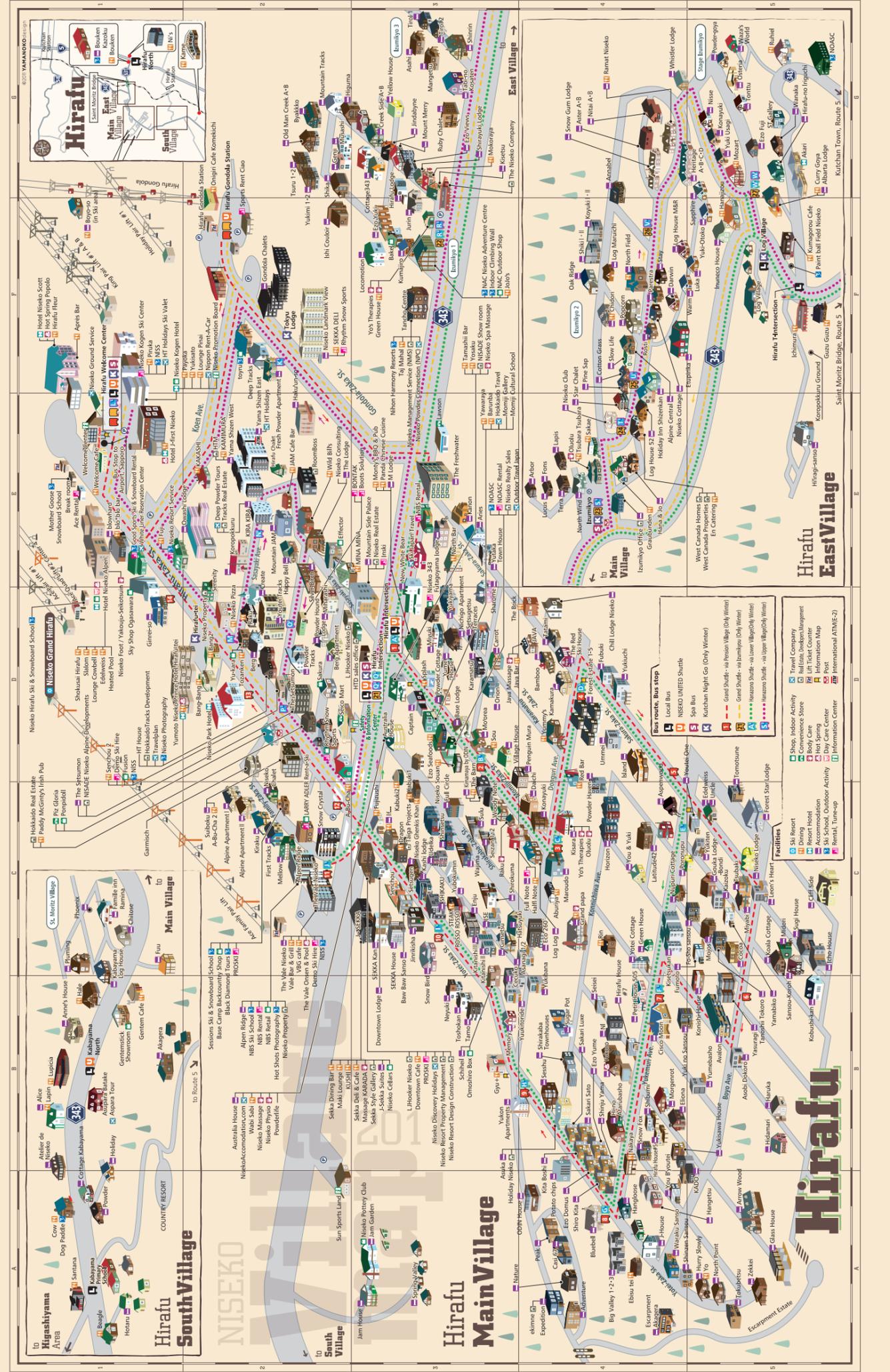
Only skiers and riders participating in the program are permitted to use this area.

Contact: Niseko Village 0136-44-2211

- ☎ Ski area shuttle bus
 - ☎ NISEKO UNITED Shuttle
 - ☎ The NISEKO UNITED Shuttle conveniently links each of the four ski resorts and is free to holders of the Niseko All Mountain Pass.
 - *The bus timetable is on "Niseko Resort Map" at lift ticket counters etc.
 - *Holders of the Niseko All Mountain Pass must present pass on boarding the bus. (1250pt ticket holders forfeit 1 point).
 - *Those without the All Mountain Pass can ride the bus for the regular fare.
 - ☎ Lift ticket counter
 - ☎ Rest room
 - ☎ Phone
 - ☎ Kid's room
 - ☎ Restaurant
 - ☎ Café
 - ☎ Shop
 - ☎ Information
 - ☎ Rental
 - ☎ Ski school
 - ☎ Onsen(Hot Spring)
 - ☎ Shuttle bus stop
 - ☎ Parking lot
 - ☎ Ski patrol
 - ☎ AED
 - ☎ Light
 - ☎ Gate to uncontrolled area
 - ☎ Mogul run
 - ☎ Wave
 - ☎ Half Pipe
 - ☎ Park(Kicker, jib, etc)
- ☎ Ungroomed Slope
☎ Easiest / More Difficult / Most Difficult
☎ Name of Slope / Maximum Gradient / Average Gradient / Run Length
☎ Number of seats
☎ Name of Lift
☎ Length- Time required
☎ Number of lift ticket points
☎ Park(Kicker, jib, etc)
- *Lift operating times and courses are subject to change due to weather, snow and light conditions etc.



- | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| A7 Kanro No Mori | C7 BBQ House Moku Moku Tei | A8 Grand Hotel (Onsen) | C8 Karabina | G6 Hilton Niseko Village | E7 Niseko Life Plan | G8 Kaya Design & Construction |
| B7 Moiwa Ski Resort | D7 Niseko Northern Resort | C8 Annupuri Village | D8 Lohas | G6 Hilton Onsen | E8 Milk Ko-bo | |
| B7 Pow Com Cafe | D7 Nook | C8 Yu Gokoro Tei (Onsen) | D8 Grove | E7 Green Leaf Hotel | E8 Saison | |
| C7 Iko No Mura | A8 Kanro Sui - Spring Water | C8 Rakuichi | | E7 Black Diamond Lodge | E8 M's Cafe | |



* TRAVEL FEATURE // miyajima



PHOTOGRAPHY AND WORDS BY // Kerstin Winter

THIS has to be one of the most romantic spots in Japan, judging from the countless number of dating couples of all ages and nationalities. Of course having a good location matters in romance. And one that offers a mix of culture, sports and adventure in a breathtaking setting is difficult to beat. Even if you are single “the Island where People and Gods live Together” offers enough to keep you distracted from all the love around you.

The small island Miyajima is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site and is considered one of Japan’s three most scenic places (nihon sankei). Since ancient times, the Japanese have been compiling lists of the most beautiful places in their country. During the 10-minute ferry ride to the island you will see why Miyajima is in the top three.

The iconic bright red torii gate comes into sight and if you take the ferry at high tide it seems to float on

top of the water. Just behind the gate lies the island’s most famous Shinto shrine, the Itsukushima Shrine. Like the torii gate, it’s built over water.

The official name of the island is Itsukushima, but most people refer to it as Miyajima, meaning “shrine-island”. It attracts around three million visitors every year. Despite the increasing number of visitors since becoming World Heritage in 1996, Miyajima has protected its unique culture and pristine nature. The island itself has

“Miyajima is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site and considered one of Japan’s three most scenic places”

been worshipped as a god and this belief has helped maintain its natural beauty.

If you have come to climb the island’s highest peak, Mt. Misen there are several hiking trails, which take you through primeval forests before you reach the top. The view from there over the red gates and shrines shimmering in the water is magnificent. If you’re in a

hurry, you can use the ropeway.

Back down and to the main village and why not explore the dreamy cobblestone alleyways while sampling some local specialties in the small shops that line them. Fresh oysters from the Seto Inland Sea and grilled juicy conga eel atop a bowl of rice are some of the most famous delicacies here.

Some cheeky deer will probably demand their share of your food - most are patient, but some can be

a little feisty. Deer have inhabited the island for centuries and have become accustomed to people, so don’t be surprised if they follow you.

Most tourists only take a day trip from nearby Hiroshima, but it’s in the evening when the island becomes peaceful and really romantic. At sunset you can have a picnic at one of the many viewpoints, while watching the

colors fade over the Seto Inland Sea.

If you decide to stay overnight, you could make the most of your Japan adventure by staying at one of the island’s ryokan. A ryokan - a traditional Japanese hotel with tatami-matted rooms and a communal bath. You can wear Yukata - a cotton lightweight kimono - while enjoying your dinner. Many Japanese guests also wear it outside for an evening stroll. The ryokans on Miyajima can be a bit pricey, so if you are on a budget stay at the backpackers hostel or the campsite.

For those into watersports, head to the opposite shore the next morning and spend the rest of the day jet skiing or boat racing.

How to get there: Trains, tram and busses run frequently from Hiroshima to Miyajimaguchi train station, slowest connection takes about one hour. From there it’s a two minutes walk to Miyajima Ferry Pier (ticket to the island ¥170). The Matsudai Miyajima Ferry goes directly from Hiroshima to Miyajima.



nisek photography

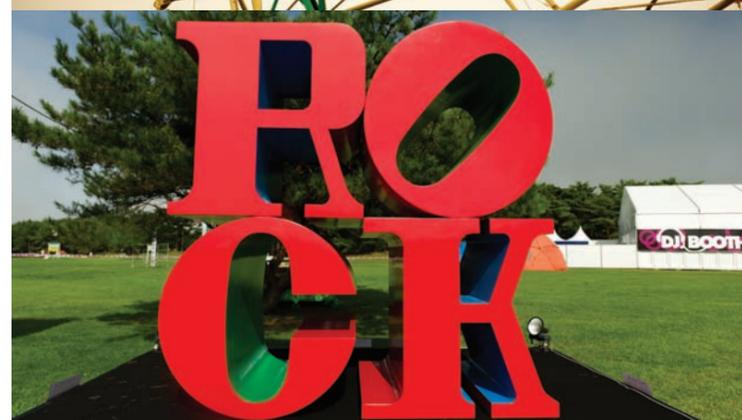
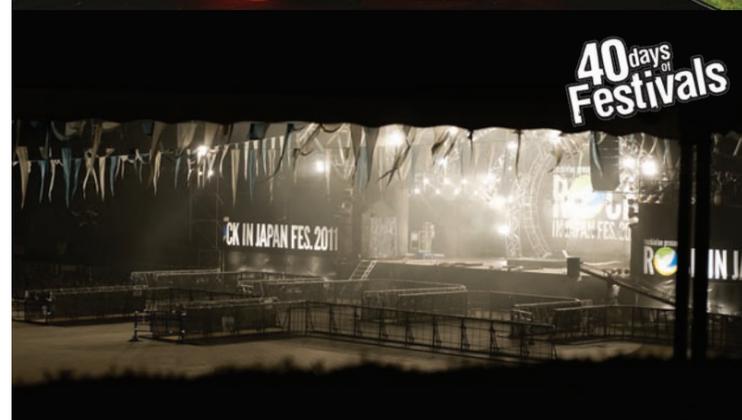


PHOTO ESSAY
PHOTOS / AARON JAMIESON



* DISCOVER HOKKAIDO



guides andrew and jean-sebastien from black diamond tours



photo // azza - niseko photography

SNOWMOBILING

SNOWMOBILES were originally built to be a utility vehicle that could travel through snow-covered areas where regular vehicles could not go. By the latter part of the 20th century people started catching on that these machines could also be used for recreational purposes, and ever since their popularity has sky-rocketed.

Nowadays snowmobiles are lighter, faster, and more comfortable than ever. The best part is that sledding can be enjoyed by just about anyone; there are different types of sleds and terrain for every level of ability. Some machines are designed to

have a passenger on the back, so even if you don't want to drive your own, you can still come along on the adventure. And if you are more of a speed and adrenalin seeker there are sleds that are designed to maneuver through heavy, deep powder conditions, and side-hilling mountainous terrain.

All snowmobiles have one thing in common though: giving access to remote areas that would be near impossible to reach otherwise. On a sled in less than an hour you can get to places that would take you days on skis. Just make sure that if you are venturing deep into the backcountry you hire a solid guide who has backcountry and avalanche

training, and to also carry your own beacon, shovel and probe, and make sure you are trained on how to use your equipment.

They are many areas in Hokkaido that offer some of the best snowmobiling in the world, and if you've never been before, make sure you take the time during your holiday to explore your winter wonderland riding on the back of a sled. If you are looking for somewhere near Niseko check out Niseko Snowmobile Adventures, who operate out of their Kanbetsu base, 15mins North East of Hirafu, and Black Diamond tours, who operate out of their new head office in Niseko Village.

KURODAKE BACKCOUNTRY



photo // andrew spragg

ASK anyone in Niseko why they're here and 99.9% will answer "the powder!" Yes, the powder here is amazing, but compared to some of the big mountains around the world the terrain in Hokkaido has been described by many as "pretty mellow".

Well, for those of you looking for more challenging and steeper terrain why not visit one of Hokkaido's best kept secrets: Kurodake. This mountain offers true big mountain skiing and endless backcountry options.

The resort itself has a 101-passenger tram that carries skiers and riders from the valley floor up to 1200 metres, which is closed for January for maintenance because it is too cold to ski! From there a short, slow double chair can take you a little further up the mountain, but it is only open after March 1. Even though there are lifts in Kurodake, it is pretty much a backcountry mountain for experts only.

Under the tram-line there is one semi-marked course that's not groomed and offers the steepest lift accessed terrain in Japan. Beyond the course is an off-piste haven, but be careful here, there are unmarked hazards, lots of technical trees, and it is littered with cliff bands.

Above the double chair lift looms the peak, and it can be accessed by a 90 to 180 minute hike. From there you can ski or ride one of the longest runs in Hokkaido that ends right in the village. If you're looking for more, you can always drop from the peak off the back side of the resort and you will find a cozy alpine refuge hut to base yourself from and hike endless backcountry lines.

If Kurodake sounds amazing but you don't have the experience to explore it on your own, you can hire a guide from one of the many companies that offer backcountry tours with some of the best guides around.

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1 – Odin Chair, designed by Jamie McLellan and Gold winner of New Zealand Best Design Awards 2011.

2, 5 – Yasuragi by Odin defines alpine spa-living in Niseko.

3 – The Barn by Odin has achieved recognition as one of Niseko's finest (and funnest) dining venues.

4 – Odin House bears the distinctive pedigree of Odin's design philosophy.

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