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HOKKAIDO

141°9

Shiraoi-dake N















Shiraoi-dake's (白老岳, 968m) three impressive sharp peaks belie this relatively diminutive hill's size. Sitting just west of the westers-most reaches of the Shikotsu-ko Caldera, the knifeedge summit ridge gives spectacular views across to Tarumae-zan, Lake Shikotsu, and the Pacific Ocean. Just to the west of the peak is Minami-Shi-(南白老岳, 945m), raoidake impressive pyramid peak with very steep sides. While this routes is most popular among snowshoers due to the initial flat approach, it makes for a fine ski tour too. There's some playful downhill on the upper half of the route.

LOCATION

Shiraoi-dake sits just to the west of the Lake Shikotsu volcanic caldera in centralsouthern Hokkaido. The start of the ski route is just over 1.2km west beyond the Takifuke Tunnel (滝笛トンネル), but there's usually nowhere to park along the busy Route 453 near the trailhead proper. Parking is about 200m further down the road.

ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

Please visit the full route guide for GPS



MAP, TEXT, PHOTOS I Rob Thomson

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MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan





GENERAL NOTES

This is a classic peak-hunt in the southern lakes region of Hokkaido, offering expansive views from the summit. The final approach is gorgeous too, with large stands of old growth trees. The initial half of the route is quite flat though, so on the descent, expect to be putting the skins back on. For those willing to bootpack, this area lends itself nicely to a fine loop of the steep, triangular Minamishiraoi-dake (南白老岳, 945m) to the southwest, Shiraoidake, and Kitashiraoi-dake (北白老岳, 945m) to the northeast. This route is popular among snowshoers, so you'll likely have company on a fine weather weekend.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES

Expect about 2.5 hours on the ascent, and about 1.5 hours on the descent

Park up at the large car park on the northern side of Route 453, about 150m west of the bridge on Route 453 near the trailhead. Route 453 is busy at the best of times with frequent truck traffic. Take care as you walk back up the road. Cross the bridge, and find a suitable spot to scramble up the snowbank on the southern side of the road.

The first 15 minutes or so is a steep zig-zag up a steep slope to a logging road, but after crossing the logging road and heading a little further due south, the wide ridge flattens off considerably. After enduring the flatlands for 30 minutes, the route starts climbing again, gently towards the prominent knob at around 872m. Traversing around the side of the knob. rather than climbing it, allows for a smoother descent, so skirt around it to the col at 850m. At this point, you'll have a grand-stand view of the pyramid-like Shiraoi-dake to the south, cloaked in gorgeous old white birch forest.

The final 75m vertical to the summit can be very steep and icy at times, so don't be afraid to depot the skis and bootpack the remaining short grunt to the summit. Enjoy the spectacular views across to Tarumae-zan 樽前山 (1041m) far to the east, and also the rather surprising steep southern slopes of Minamishiraoi-dake just a stone's throw away. Return the way you came.

TRANSPORT

By car: Conveniently, this route is off Route 453 – the main route most visitors would travel on from Chitose Airport to Niseko. There's room to park about 10 cars at a large snow-cleared area about 200m west of the trailhead on the northern side of Route 453.

Public transport: There is no public transport to this route.

SAFETY NOTES

Beyond the usual caveats regarding snow safety and cold weather preparedness, possibly the riskiest part of this route is the 200m walk along the shoulder of Route 453. There's regular, fast moving traffic along this route, and they won't be expecting people walking along the road. Take particular care in low visibility conditions.

ONSEN NEARBY

If heading back to Lake Shikotsu, there are a number of onsen to choose from in the village itself. Marukoma Onsen 丸駒 温泉 (1000yen) is a favourite of ours on Lake Shikotsu, but it's on the opposite side of the lake. Note also the day-visitor hours for the onsen at Marukoma finish at 3pm.

PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Load your printer with A4 printer paper (210mm x 297mm). If you've only got Letter size (215.9mm x 279.4 mm), just follow the instructions below. You'll achive an accurate scale, but the map will be clipped a little at the top and bottom.

STEP 2

Open the print window by clicking on File > Print (or hitting Ctrl + P on your keyboard).

STFP 3

Make sure "Actual Size" is selected.

STFP 4

For double-sided printing, select "Print on both sides of paper".

STFP 5

For best results, select the highest quality print option available on your printer (settings will vary).

STEP 6

You won't need this instructions page, so just select the pages that don't include this instruction sheet.

STEP 7

Click "Print".

PLEASE PRINT AT 'ACTUAL SIZE' (NO SCALING)

The 1:25,000 scale used in the map is accurate if the PDF is printed without scaling (i.e., ACTUAL SIZE). Follow the instructions on this page to ensure an accurate rendering of the scale.



ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS









