





# Kuro-dake


黒岳 Ski Touring Map 1:25000





 4.5hrs  
Time

 638m  
Total Climb

 1984m  
Highest point

 6.6km  
Distance

 7/10  
Difficulty

 Jan-Apr  
Best season

Kurodake 黒岳 (1984m) is an impressive buttress to the high Daisetsuzan plateau at the northern end of the Dai-setsuzan Range. It's a popular back-country ski destination, due to its ease of access via the Sounkyo Ropeway, whisking skiers to 1300m, close to the treeline. Flanked by deep gorges lined with precipitous cliffs and bluffs, the peak is a sight to behold. For the intermediate backcountry skier with good steep-skiing and ski touring skills, this bread-and-butter route to the rocky summit and back is a fine objective in good weather. For reference we've also included a descent to the Sounkyo Village on skis, although most skiers opt to return on the gondola.

**LOCATION**  
Kurodake sits at the northern end of the Daisetsuzan Range in central Hokkaido. The route here starts at the top ropeway station on the Taisetsu Sounkyo Ropeway. The ropeway bottom station is in the alpine tourist village of Sounkyo, about 65km east of Asahikawa City.

**GENERAL NOTES**  
Kurodake arguably has some of the best above-treeline lift-accessed alpine backcountry skiing in Hokkaido. Accessibility is great, with the Sounkyo Ropeway taking skiers to 1300m, from

which there's another 700m-vertical or so of exposed-to-the-elements climb to the summit. On a good day with good visibility, the climb and skiing is straight forward. The snow can be exceptional, with Hokkaido power to perfection. On the more usual day with murk and wind, this route becomes a serious environment, calling for good experience, gear, and judgement. Despite there being a ropeway and, from April a couple of groomed slopes, the area above the chairlift is uncontrolled, un-patrolled, serious backcountry terrain.

**Sounkyo Ropeway:** The ropeway runs year-round, but closes with high wind. 2,400yen for a round trip ticket, 1,400yen one-way.

**Difficulty:** As mentioned above, this bread-and-butter route from the ropeway to summit and back is relatively straight forward for most intermediate and above backcountry skiers, assuming the usual good experience, gear, and careful consultation with the weather. Anywhere off this main up-and-back route, however, becomes extremely committing, remote, and steep, very quickly.

**Maps:** Our PDF map of Kurodake and surrounds uses official Japan government map data, but that data is not perfect. The Kurodakesawa drainage in particular looks gnarly on the map, with plenty of marked cliffs and bluffs, but they're just the main cliffs. There are unmarked ones too.



**ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES**  
Expect about three hours on the climb up to the summit from the top gondola station. If descending all the way back to Sounkyo Village on skis, allow plenty of time (1.5hrs would be a conservative starting point) for route-finding on the descent from the top gondola station - there are multiple bluffs that need to be avoided.

Make the most of the day, and catch the earliest gondola up the ropeway. You may need to line up, so arrive early. At the top station, make sure to sign the logbook with your details – these details will be used as a reference for any search and rescue incidents (make sure to also let someone know your plans). The upper chairlift only runs in the spring skiing months, so start skinning from the upper gondola station. The climb from the gondola station to the upper chairlift station is fairly flat, and brings you to near the treeline at 1500m.

From the upper chairlift station the slope steepens considerably, requiring long zig zags to gain altitude. Keeping near the northeastern ridge, snow conditions should be quite good to around the 1750m mark. Beyond this, conditions underfoot can often be hard windpack, requiring either a sketchy bootpack and/or ski crampons. The summit itself is most commonly windswept, with exposed rock. Return the way you came, or, if snowpack

DAISETSUZAN NATIONAL PARK

conditions are suitable, head down the main east-northeastern face for some great skiing before cutting back north towards the upper chairlift station.

From the upper gondola station, it's possible to ski down below the ropeway. This is not a particularly popular option – most people opt to spend their time lapping the slopes above the gondola and return back to Sounkyo Village via the ropeway.

If descending from the upper gondola station on skis, understand that in places the forest is thick with trees, it can be steep, there's plenty of sluffing potential, there's also flat-ish spots, and finding your own route may result in getting bluffed, so take utmost care. Advanced skiers will enjoy it, but many intermediate skiers may find the balance tipping towards Type-2 fun.

**TRANSPORT**  
**By car:** Vehicle access to Sounkyo is good from Asahikawa. Take the expressway to the Kamikawa-Sounkyo Interchange to speed things up. There's a large carpark on the western side of the gondola building.  
**Public transport:** Sounkyo Ropeway is accessible by public bus throughout the winter season. The Sounkyo Bus Terminal is just outside the post office. From there, it's a 5

minute walk uphill to the gondola station.


**SAFETY NOTES**  
The presence of a large ropeway tends to lull one into a false sense of security on Kurodake. In reality, this nearly-2000m peak is a serious undertaking that demands respect. Consult the weather before setting off and be prepared – this is the backcountry, and demands back-country skills and equipment. In deep winter, temperatures will happily drop to below -20°C, with windchill on top of that. Those wishing to venture off the main face of Kurodake need to be experienced, fit, and have plenty of time in the day up their sleeves. It's not uncommon for the inexperienced and experienced alike



bluffed, with no option but to attempt a steep bootpack in bottomless powder.

**ONSEN NEARBY**  
For the day-visitor to Kurodake, the hands-down must-soak onsen is Kurodake-no-yu 黒岳の湯 (600yen) in Sounkyo Village, just a couple of minutes stroll down from the gondola station. The hot spring water is amazing, and the atmosphere in the roof-top outdoor pools is great. The Hokkaido-style down-to-earth Italian restaurant Bear Grill Canyon on the ground floor is also highly recommended – the local Hokkaido venison stroganoff (1,500yen) is to die for. ■

Japanese Map Glossary		
Romaji	Kanji	English
bunki	分岐	junction
cho	町	town
dake/mine	岳/峯	peak
eki	駅	station
goya/koya	小屋	hut
hinangoya	避難小屋	shelter
ike	池	pond
kawa/gawa	川	river
kako	火口	crater
ko/mizumi	湖	lake
kyo	峡	gorge
numa	沼	pond
onsen	温泉	hot spring
sawa	沢	stream
taira/daira	平	plateau
tani/dani	谷	valley
taki	滝	waterfall
toge	峠	pass
yama/san/zan	山	mountain



**ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE**  
Please visit the full route guides for GPS files, interactive maps, and extra safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/kurodake>


**Disclaimer** The information on this map was derived from digital databases provided by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan and the Biodiversity Center of Japan. Care was taken in the creation of this map. HokkaidoWilds.org cannot accept any responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional accuracy. There are no warranties, expressed or implied, including the warranty of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, accompanying this product. However, notification of any errors will be appreciated.

**TEXT, PHOTOS, MAP** | Rob Thomson

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MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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## PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

### STEP 1

Load your printer with A3 printer paper (297mm x 420mm). If you've only got Tabloid or Ledger size (279mm x 432 mm), just follow the instructions below. You'll achieve 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).

### STEP 3

Make sure "Actual Size" is selected.

### STEP 4

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

### STEP 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.

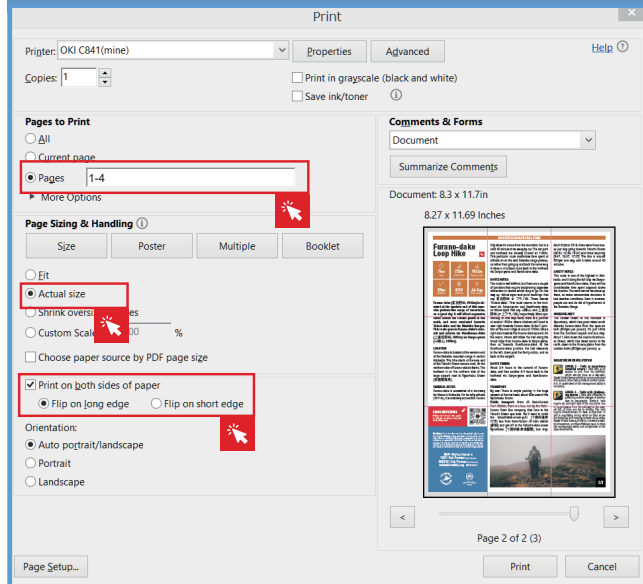
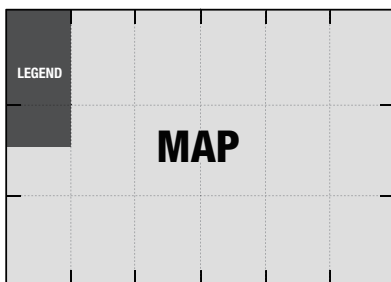


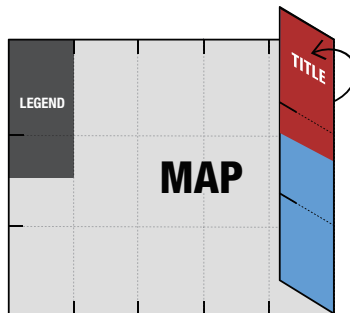
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

## ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

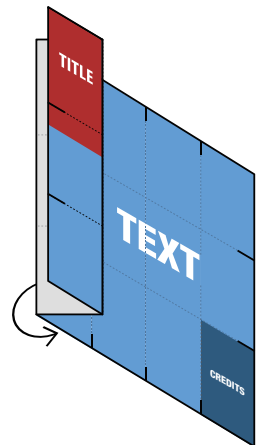
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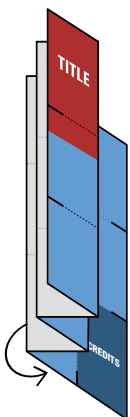
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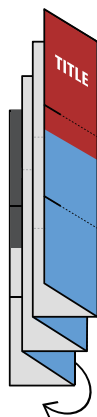
3



4



5



6



7

