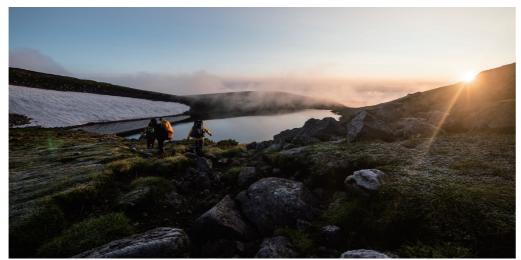


The Daisetsuzan Grand Traverse 大雪山グ ランドトラバース is a multi-day trek along the exposed alpine spine of the Daisetsuzan National Park in Hokkaido, Japan. Six to eight days long, this iconic Hokkaido expedition covers a mind-boggling diversity of high-latitude volcanic scenery. From the lonely southern terminus of Genshigahara 原始ヶ原 to the northern outpost of Aizankei Onsen 愛山渓温泉, here we cover the longest uninterrupted version of the traverse. Ascending from prehistoric peaty wetlands, the route covers active volcanic landscapes, rocky knife-edge ridges, vast alpine plateaus, and offers the opportunity to ascend Hokkaido's highest peak, -Asahidake 旭岳 (2291m). Hovering around 2000m the entire way, this exposed traverse, infamous for deadly storms, requires a high level of planning, experience and risk management to complete.





LOCATION

This hike traverses the Daisetsuzan National Park from south to north, in central Hokkaido. The route starts in the wild and lonely Genshigahara Trailhead 原始ヶ原登山口 near Furano City 富 良野市, and ends at the equally lonely Aizankei Trailhead 愛山渓温泉登山口 above Kamikawa village. Neither trailhead is accessible by public transport, requiring a taxi ride at the southern end, and a pre-arranged shuttle at the northern end (see Transport section below). Naturally, it's possible to do the hike in the opposite direction, but the lure of the hopelessly gorgeous and iconic Aizankei Onsen Hostel at the end of an 8-day journey on foot begs to be the reward for one's effort.

GENERAL NOTES

In this guide, we describe the longest uninterrupted traverse of the Daisetsuzan National Park - a full traverse from south to north along the spine of the range. Note that this is not the most commonly walked version of the Grand Traverse. Hikers seeking more brevity or convenience will start in the north either in Asahidake Onsen 旭岳温泉



Details: Large, basic two-story hut, 1 hour from Hakuun-dake summit, rebuilt in 2020, Hutkeeper present in summer. Official campsite nearby. Hut available in winter, but no heating.

Capacity: 60 persons.

Cost: 2000yen per night (free in winter). 500yen for campsite. 1000yen trail maintenance donation also requested.

Contact: Kamikawa Town (上川町), TEL: 01658-2-4058, https://www.hakuundake.ip/

Booking details: No need to book, but the hut is very busy in the high season (August).

or Sounkyo (Kurodake) 層雲峡 (黒岳), and end in the south at Tokachi-dake Onsen 十勝岳温泉 after summiting Furano-dake 富良野岳. This is because 1) there are ropeways in the north that can aid the ascent to the alpine and 2) committing to a shorter traverse will decrease the probability of being caught out in storms, increasing chances of completing the route in relative comfort and safety. If committing to the full traverse (and being determined to finish it), hikers must carry a few days of extra food in anticipation of sitting out inevitable storms (indeed, we did).

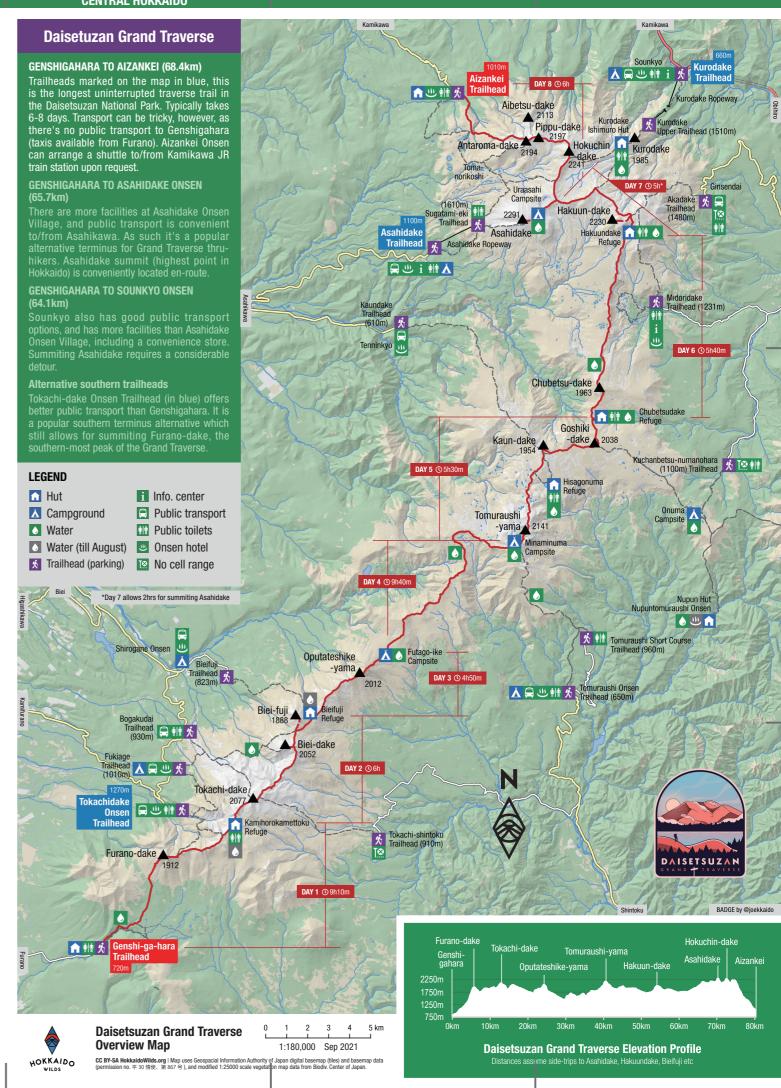
What makes a 'Grand' Traverse? The most common definiton of a 'Grand' Traverse must include Furano-dake in the south, and usually starts/finishes at either Asahidake or Kurodake. For aesthetic (and purist) appeal, we heartily recommend experienced hikers plan well and attempt the extended traverse (Genshigahara to Aizankei) outlined on this page. For more discussion on this point see https://hokw.jp/defi-

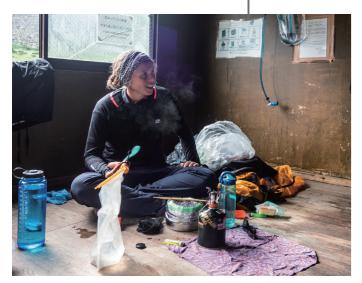
When to go: The main season for summer hiking in Daisetsuzan is from July into September; before and after this, you need to be prepared and equipped for snow on the ground and/ or falling from the sky. Even in summer, expect temperatures down to freezing overnight.

Flora and geography: This high alpine volcanic route is home to flora ranging from hardy creeping pine to extremely delicate permafrost areas and alpine vegetation. From July to early August, the plateaus are home to spectacular alpine flower meadows. Hikers are asked to keep to trails at

Preparations and what to pack: This hike requires multiple 6-9hr hiking days. If you're not very hiking fit, it's worth doing some long day trips to get in hiking shape. Keep your pack as light as possible, but still carry the gear required to deal with near-freezing temperatures and rain, even in summer. See our full preparations and kit-list here: https://hokw.jp/kit-grand.

Permits and trail costs: Besides hut or campsite fees at Hakuundake Hut (payable at the hut), there are no other permits required for the hike and no trail access costs.





Weather: Close attention to weather forecasts is important (there's good cell reception at peaks along the way). It is almost unheard of in the Daisetsuzan Range to go more than three or four days without some sort of serious weather. Indeed, we spent 48 hours in a hut waiting for a storm to subside. During the storm, with 60-90km/h winds, another hiker just 8km away from us died from exposure. The high peaks in Hokkaido are relatively low altitude, but Hokkaido's high latitude and positioning relative to the jetstream means that even 2000m here can be on par with 3000m peaks elsewhere in the world. Bad weather often rolls in with SE systems.

Huts and campsites: On this hike, you will need to spend up to seven nights in shelter huts or in campgrounds. Huts en route are very spartan with no cooking facilities, washrooms, or bedding, so you need to take all your food, bedding and cooking equipment. Most huts have toilets, but some don't. Expect basic communal sleeping platforms and not much else. The huts may be crowded during the summer holiday season and at weekends. Camping is allowed outside all huts. Campsites are equally spartan, alpine, and windswept, with no toilet facilities. Camping is only



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Details: A very basic, unmanned A-frame hut. There is a campsite nearby. **Capacity:** 30 persons.

Cost: No charge.

Contact: Kamikawa Town (上川町), TEL: 01658-2-4058

Booking details: Not possible to book. The hut can be busy in the high season (August).

permitted at designated campsites marked on the map, or next to huts.

Toilets: There are few toilets along this route. Five out of eight days, you'll need to carry your own human waste out with you; catholes are not allowed in the alpine in Daisetsuzan. Portable toilet bags are available online. Toilet privacy booths (for using your portable toilet bags) are available at some (but not all) campgrounds. See our 'Pooping on the

Daisetsuzan Grand Traverse' post here: https://hokw.jp/poop-grand. For huts with toilets, used toilet paper should be packed out.

Water: By September it can become difficult to find water at the campsites and huts. Some water sources dry up as early as late July onwards, so be prepared to carry plenty of water in your pack. All water sourced en route needs to be filtered or boiled, to protect against the fox-borne Echinococcus parasite (see our deep-dive at https://hokw.jp/drink-grand).

Trail information: For up to date trail and hut information, contact the Asahidake Visitor Center (TEL: 0166-97-2153, www.asahidake-vc-2291. jp/eng) or the Sounkyo Visitor Center (TEL: 01658-9-4400, http://sounkyovc.net). Note, however, that these visitor centers are at the far north end of the range. They may need time to call around to find out the situation on water sources etc at the southern end of the range - be prepared to call them back or have them return your call. Alternatively, drop a question in the Facebook group Hiking, Climbing and Camping in Japan, and someone may have an answer for you.

Cellular reception: There is reasonable mobile phone reception (4G) throughout the range on peaks and some high, exposed ridgelines. Reception at huts and campgrounds is patchy at best.

Winter season traverse: Deep winter-time (Dec-Feb) attempts on the Daisetsuzan Grand Traverse are rare, but not unheard of. They require a full alpine winter expedition style approach on skis. Around two weeks is the norm for timing in deep winter due to storms and deep snow. Spring-time (April-May) ski traverses are relatively more practical and allow for both multi-day traverses as well as skimo-style attacks on the range. The shortest time we know of for a spring traverse (60km from Tokachidake Onsen to Asahidake) is a shade over 13 hours by local skimo athlete Ken Fujikawa, in May 2016. This beats a previous record by a Norwegian in 2015 of 17 hours.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES

Below, we outline about as leisurely a traverse as you can think of – a very leisurely 8 days. In

reality, hikers up to the task of the Grand Traverse will likely combine days to make the most of good weather. For example, we combined Days 2 & 3, as well as Days 6 & 7. This made it a very demanding six-day hike — besides Day 5, we were walking for more than 9 hours per day. When the weather is good, it is often worth getting in as much distance as possible. The route is mostly well-defined but rocky and steep in places, so allow plenty of time each day for leisurely stops. The route can also be done in reverse, starting in Aizankei.

Day 1 - Genshigahara 原始ヶ原 to Kamihorokamettoku Refuge 上ホロカメットク 避難小屋

Gorgeous start to the traverse, climbing up to the Daisetsuzan plateau through the peaty, marshy, old-growth forest of Genshigahara. Long first day with a heavy pack, considering the hefty altitude gain. Once you're at the Furano-dake summit, most of the climbing for the trip is done. Kamihorokamettoku-hinangoya Hut is basic but functional, has a toilet.

▶ There's a spring and stream about one hour from the trailhead. From there till Kamihorokametokku Hut (7hrs walking) there are no water sources (hut water dries up by end of August).

Day 2 - Kamihorokamettoku Refuge 上ホロカメットク避難小屋 to Biei-fuji Refuge 美瑛富士 避難小屋

Trekking via the desolate, martian landscape of the highly active Tokachi-dake 十勝岳 (2077m) volcanic area. Biei-dake 美瑛岳 (2052m) and Biei-fuji 美瑛富士 (1889m) peaks are easily attainable as side-hikes along the way, so be sure to bag them if weather and time allows it. Strong hikers may want to compress Day 2 and 3 into one long day. Bieifuji-hinangoya Hut is basic with no toilets, but there is a privacy booth next to the hut for use with portable toilet bags (details: https://hokw.jp/poop-grand).

No water sources between the two huts. Bieifuji Hut water can dry up as early as end of July.

Day 3 - Biei-fuji Refuge 美瑛富士避難小屋 to Futago-ike Campsite 双子池キャンプ指定地

of the Daisetsuzan Range. Oputateshike-yama オプタテシケ山 (2012m) and its dramatic, airy narrow ridge are the highlights of the day. Watch out for curious nakiusagi pika rodents in the rocks. Futago-ike campsite is spartan, with no toilets – pack your poop out.

Say goodbye to Tokachi-dake day-trekkers, and

enjoy the quiet solitude of the remote mid-section

① 4h 50m 1 312m 1 640m = 5.1km

▶ Futago-ike campsite has plenty of water available for filtering till late August. If campsite is dry, head to Futago-ike ponds 20min further north to fill up.

Day 4 - Futago-ike Campsite 双子池キャンプ 指定地 to Tomuraushi-yama トムラウシ山

() 9h 40m **↑** 886m **↓** 344m **=** 11.8km

Now deep in a seldom-walked zone of the Daisetsuzan National Park, expect broad alpine scenery. Trail deteriorates somewhat, with the first half of the day walking through thick, head-high aromatic dwarf pines. Views from the Koganegahara plateau 黄金ヶ原 are inspiring. Tomuraushi-yama (2141m) has an infamous past, but is a popular remote peak. Camp 20 minutes below the summit at the spartan Minami-numa Campsite 南沼キャンプ指定地 – no toilets, pack your poop out (there are privacy booths at the campsite).

■ There's only one water source during the day – about half way near Sansendai 三仙台. Plenty of water at the Minami-numa Campsite. Both

sources have water throughout the season.

Day 5 - Tomuraushi-yama トムラウシ山 to Chubetsu-dake Refuge 忠別岳避難小屋

③ 5h 30m **Ĵ** 311m **Ĵ** 626m **□** 10.6km

Expect more hikers on the trail — Tomuraushiyama northwards is much more well-travelled. Hike over vast boulder fields, past scenic tarns in the Japanese Garden 日本庭園, and across easy-walking boardwalks. Make the day even shorter by staying at Hisagonuma Refuge ヒサゴ 沼避難小屋, a basic hut next to a large mountain tarn. Chubetsudake Refuge is also beautifully located, next to a snowpatch and creek suitable for paddling in. Both huts have toilets.

One all-season water source along the way

「(Amanuma Tarn 天沼), water at Chubetsudake Hut till early September.

Day 6 - Chubetsu Refuge 忠別岳避難小屋 to Hakuundake Refuge 白雲岳避難小屋

© 5h 40m ↑ 628m 1 292m === 10.7km

Enjoy views of the dramatic cliffs of Chubetsudake 忠別岳 (1963m), and the expansive Hiragatake Plateau 平ヶ岳. Take in views down to the Kogen-numa 高原沼 tarns below — home to a high concentration of brown bears. Hakuundake Refuge 白雲岳避難小屋 was rebuilt in 2020, has toilets and great views. We combined Days 6 & 7 into one long day.

■ Chubetsu-numa Tarn 忠別沼 and Hakuundake Hut have water all season.

Day 7 - Hakuun-dake Refuge 白雲岳避難 小屋 to Uraasahi Campsite 裏旭キャンプ 指定地

Timing and distances above include summiting—Hakuun-dake 白雲岳 (2230m) and Asahidake (2291m) along the way — drop packs at junctions and they're worth the extra side-trips. You're now well within the Asahidake volcanic area — observe the gigantic Ohachidaira crater 御鉢平 and walk on fine white volcanic rock. Uraasahi Campsite 裏旭キャンプ指定地 is very basic, no toilets — pack out your own poop. Summit of Asahidake, Hokkaido's highest peak, is so close you could touch it.



Japanese Map Glossary

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Romaji	Kanji	English
bunki cho dake/mine eki goya/koya hinangoya ike kawa/gawa kako ko/mizumi kyo numa onsen sawa taira/daira tani/dani	分町岳駅小難池川火湖峡沼泉沢平谷滝野屋小地川口湖峡沼泉沢平谷滝	junction town peak station hut shelter pond river crater lake gorge pond hot spring stream plateau valley waterfall
toge yama/san/zan	岭山	pass mountain





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Details: A very basic, unmanned, emergency-

use only hut. There is a campsite nearby. **Capacity:** 30 persons.

Cost: No charge.

Contact: Kamifurano Town (上富良野町), TEL: 0167-45-6983

Booking details: Not possible to book. The hut can be busy in the high season (August).



■ There's plenty of water available near Uraasahi campsite all season.

Day 8 - Uraasahi Campsite 裏旭キャンプ指 定地 to Aizankei Onsen 愛山渓温泉

Escape B Shirogane Onsen

Ski Area

142°38

Shirogane Campground 白金野営場

Shirogane-onsen

Kokuritsu Daisetsu Seishonen Koryu-no-le 国立大雪青少年交流の家

142°39′

Some of Hokkaido's highest peaks are concentrated at the north end of Daisetsuzan National Park, and today you'll bag a number of them, with relatively little climbing involved. Descend to Aizankei via the Numano-daira 沼

 $egthinspace{1mm}
egthinspace{1mm}
egt$ 1hr). Savour completing the longest Daisetsuzan traverse by staying a night at the Aizankei Eco Lodge onsen 愛山渓温泉エコロッジ.

Stock up well at campsite; no water for about

142°41′

Magnetic North 10°42' W

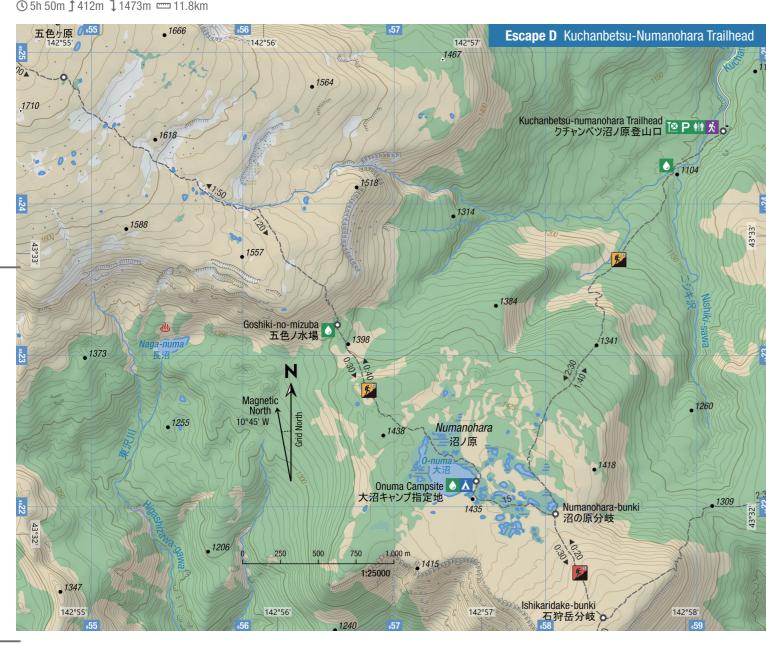
142°41′

4hrs. Water available at tarns lower down on descent, if going via Numano-daira.

ESCAPE ROUTES

This alpine trail spanning the length of the Daiset-





Gate (unlocked - keep closed) ゲート(施錠されないが通行後閉じる)

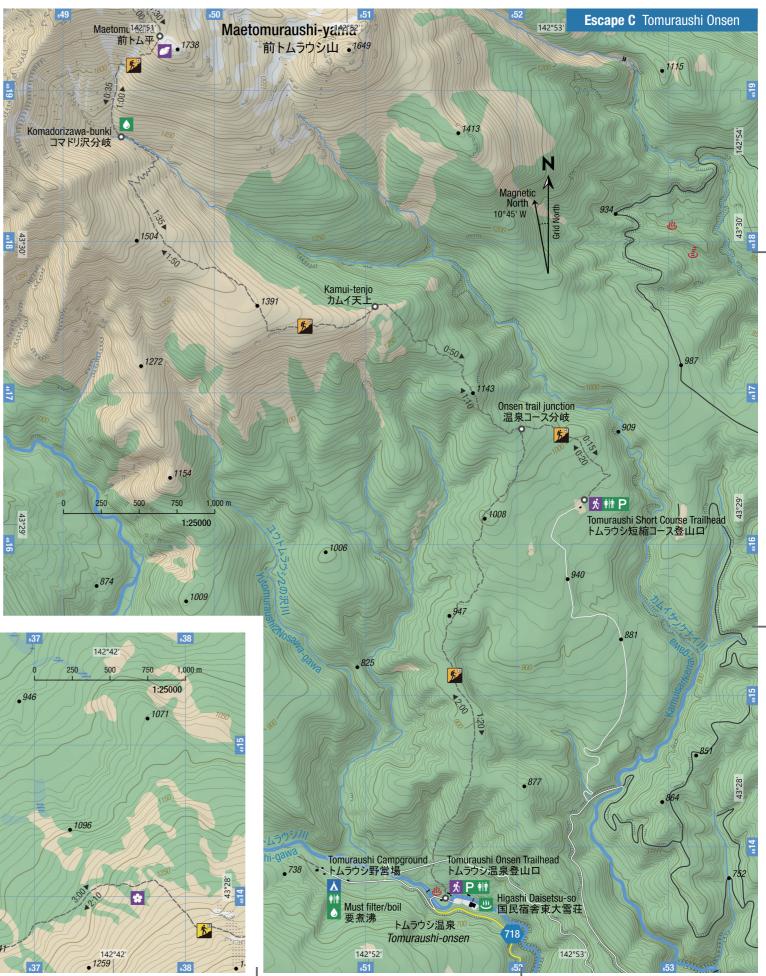
752

アバレ川 のyaushinai-daku

142°40′

Biei-fuji Trailhead 美瑛富士登山口

1.5hr walk from Shirogane Onsen





3



Details: A very basic, prefab style frame hut. There is a campsite nearby. **Capacity:** 20 persons. **Cost:** No charge.

Contact: Biei Town Hall General Affairs Department (美瑛町), TEL: 0166-92-1111 Booking details: Not possible to book. The hut can be busy in the high season (August).

suzan Range is very exposed. If bad weather persists, then hikers may need to consider cutting the trip short. This can be done via sporadic trails dropping down to the west or east of the main spine of the range. In general, trailheads on the western side of the range have more services. We recommend studying the map well before heading into the alpine, and familiarize yourself with the options.

Southern half of traverse: Prevailing winds during summer storms are generally southeast. Therefore, any of the southwestern trailheads can be good candidates for escape, as they all head to facilities: Bieifuji Trailhead 美 瑛富士登山口 near Shirogane Onsen 白金温 泉, Tokachidake Observatory (Bogakudai 望岳 台), Fukiage Onsen 吹上温泉 and Tokachidake Onsen 十勝岳温泉. There's a very old trail heading east from Tokachidake summit, but the trailhead is very remote with no facilities, and has no cell service. From Bieifuji (Day 2) north, there's no escape from the alpine until Tomuraushi-yama, exactly halfway through the traverse. The shortest route down heads southeast and ends at the popular Tomuraushi Short-course trailhead トムラウシ山短縮登 $\sqcup \sqcup$, where there are toilets, a large parking area, and cell service.



no cell service), Hakuundake to Kogen Onsen 高原温泉 and/or Ginsendai 銀泉台.

TRANSPORT

Northern half of traverse: From Tomu-

raushi-yama heading north, the are escape routes

at more regular intervals: Kaun-dake 化雲岳 to Teninnkyo 天人峡 (6hrs), Goshiki-dake 五色岳 to

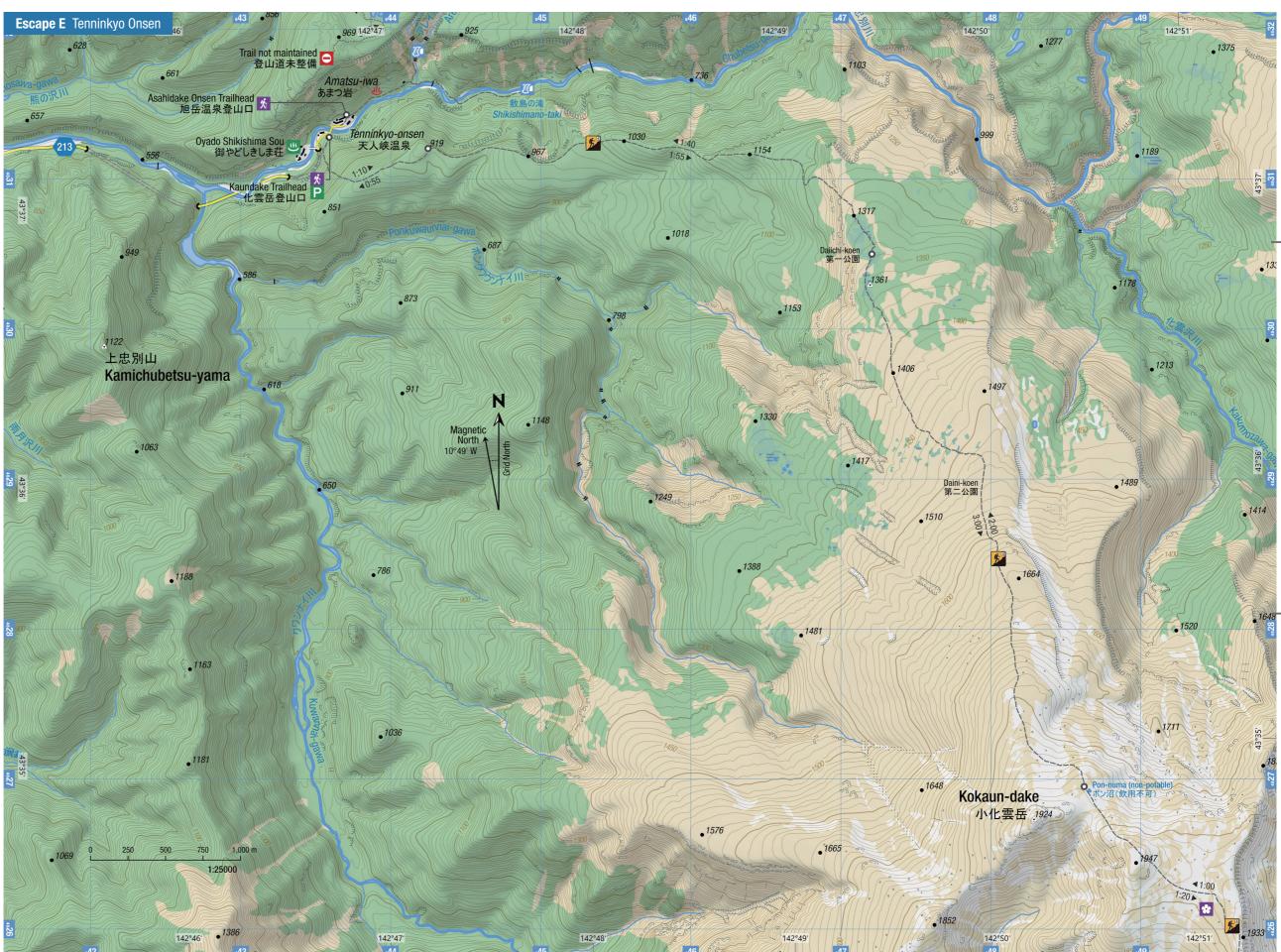
the remote Numanohara-Kuchanbetsu Trailhead

沼ノ原クチャンベツ登山口 (4.5hrs, toilets but

By car: Both ends of the route are accessible by private car, with plenty of parking at both the

Genshigahara Trailhead 原始ヶ原登山口 and the Aizankei Onsen 愛山渓温泉. With only one car, however, shuttling will be time-consuming. You'll need to access at least one of the trailheads by train and taxi/shuttle (see public transport below). If leaving a car at the Aizankei Onsen carpark,







make sure to mention to staff that you'll be away for over a week. They were worried about us when we reappeared 9 days later. having not let them know our plans.

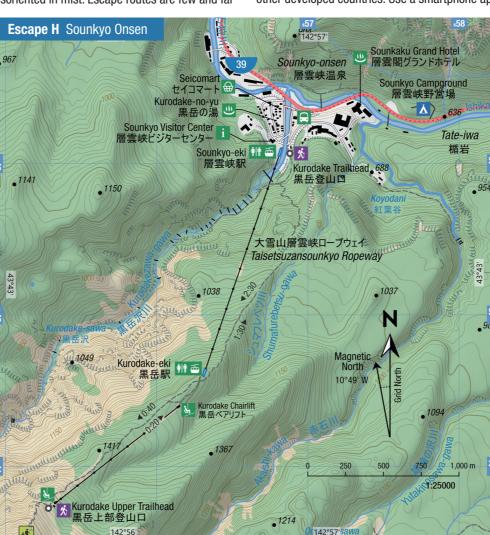
Public transport: Neither ends of the traverse are accessible by public transport alone. At the southern end, you'll need to take a taxi from Furano JR train station (富良野駅) to the Genshigahara Trailhead. This takes about 40 minutes (20km), so expect about 7000yen to 8000yen (about US\$70) for the taxi fare. At the northern end of the range, the remote Aizankei Onsen currently offers a free shuttle down to Kamikawa JR train station (上川駅) for overnight staying guests at the eco-lodge (4500yen per night) or hut next door (2500yen per night), but this must be arranged in advance (TEL: 01658-9-4525 or Email: aizankei@rinyu.jp). From both Furano JR Station and Kamikawa JR Station, there are regular express trains to Sapporo 札幌市

and Asahikawa City 旭川市. Note that Asahidake Onsen and Sounkvo have good public transport options to and from Asahikawa City. For this reason, many hikers opt to end/start their traverse trips in one of those alternative ends, but this does omit the northern-most end of the traverse.

SAFETY NOTES

This route takes you into the wild, high-altitude interior of the mountain range away from more popular day hike areas and on to quieter and more isolated trails. Daisetsuzan is a dangerous place in bad weather with real risks of hypothermia for poorly equipped hikers. The Tomuraushi Disaster of 2009 is a sobering case in point where eight members of a hiking party died from exposure. Conditions can change quickly, it is very exposed to the wind and the upper slopes can be much colder than down at the trailhead. Carry appropriate gear and enough emergency supplies to sit out bad weather in a hut if necessary. We car-

ried an extra two days of food (for a total of 10 days rations), and were happy we did – we spent 48 hours in a hut sheltering from a 60-90km/h typhoon during our 8-day traverse. The ridges are broad and featureless and it is possible to become disoriented in mist. Escape routes are few and far





between on this traverse. Any escape routes that do exist are major undertakings in their own right - at least five hours. Bears are numerous in the range. In reality, you're unlikely to see one, but while the Hokkaido brown bear is much timider than brown bears elsewhere in the world, take care when coming across fresh droppings and tracks, and make vourself known in heavily wooded areas by clapping your hands.

Weather forecasts: We highly recommend Windy.com for very accurate 48hr forecasts for the Hokkaido mountain regions.

Emergencies: In an emergency, call 110 (police). There is good cell reception (4G) on peaks and in exposed ridge-line areas. Be prepared to stay put for several hours - coordination of an emergency response in Hokkaido can take longer than in other developed countries. Use a smartphone app





(Google Maps, Alpine Quest etc) to find your exact GPS coordinates, and communicate that to emergency responders. Use our PDF maps in the free Avenza Maps app to pinpoint your location while offline (download here: https://hokw.jp/geogrdtv). On-the-ground emergency response personnel may not speak much English. We've included UTM grids on our maps, but UTM grids are not

DAISETSUZAN GRADE SYSTEM



Grade 1 - Trails to enjoy beautiful nature I Short-distance trails to and from a hot spring or a ropeway station. Grade-1 trails are relatively flat with a small altitude gain or loss. They have steps and boardwalks that provide comfort underfoot



Grade 2 - Trails to touch beautiful nature | Short-distance trails with good access to and from a trailhead Grade-2 trails have stens and hoardwalks that provide comfort underfoot. A certain level of risk management ability is necessary



Grade 3 - Trails to experience beautiful nature Trails with good access to and from the trailhead, which can be done as a day-walk. Grade-3 trails have a priority to conserve a natural atmosphere rather than provide of comfort underfoot. A certain level of risk management ability is necessary



Grade 4 - Trails with challenging terrain | Trails with difficulties in predicting sudden changes of weather due to topography. Grade-4 trails require an overnight stay in the mountains due to long-distance from the trailhead to the nearest hut, of from one hut to another. The trails require hikers/trekkers to have a high-level of skill in negotiating strong winds on trails above the timberline and crossing torrents along valley. Grade-4 trails have a priority to conserve a natural atmosphere, so hikers/trekkers need to have risk management ability and a high-level of risk assess-



Grade 5 - Trails with extremely challenging terrain I Trails with difficulties in predicting sudden changes of weather due to topography. Grade-5 trails are long-distance trails from trailhead to the nearest hut or from one hut to another. The trails require hikers/ trekkers to have a high-level of skill in crossing forrents and rock surfaces. Grade-5 trails have a priority to conserve a natural atmosphere, therefore hikers/trekkers need to have risk management ability and extremely high-level of risk assessment ability

yet used widely within Hokkaido search and rescue operations.

ONSEN NEARBY

The terminus of the traverse is the iconic Aizankei Onsen 愛山渓温泉 (850yen). This lonely outpost of mountain culture sits at 1000m altitude and at the end of a long winding single-lane road (closes often after heavy rain). There's an old but well-kept hut there (2,500yen per night) as well as an eco-lodge with an attached onsen (from 4,000yen per night). Both ooze with a passion for the mountains. They also both have kitchens for use by guests. They sell basic foodstuffs such as instant noodles and snacks but no meals.

ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

Please visit the full route guides for GPS files, interactive maps, and extra safety notes: https://hokw.jp/grdtrv

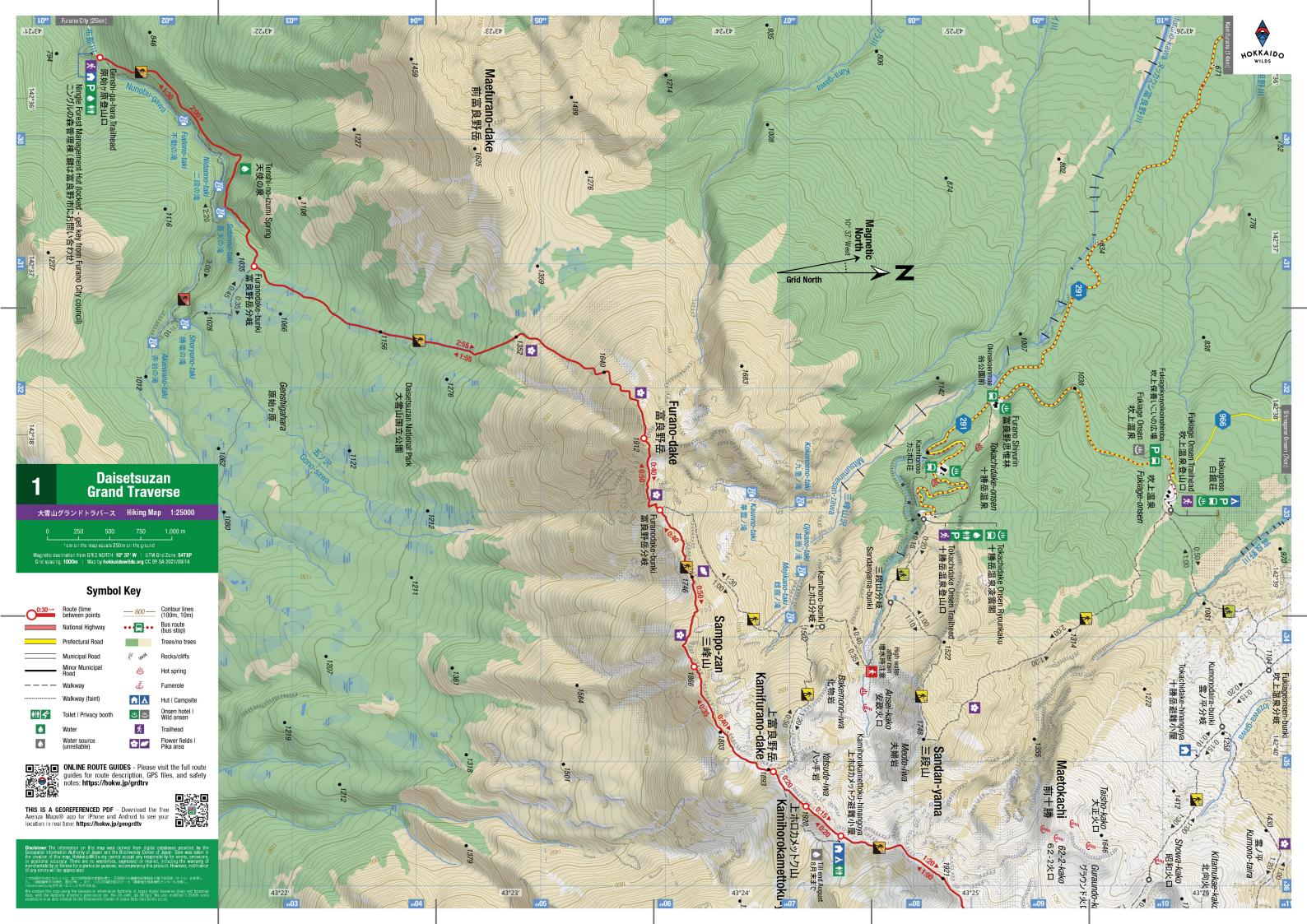


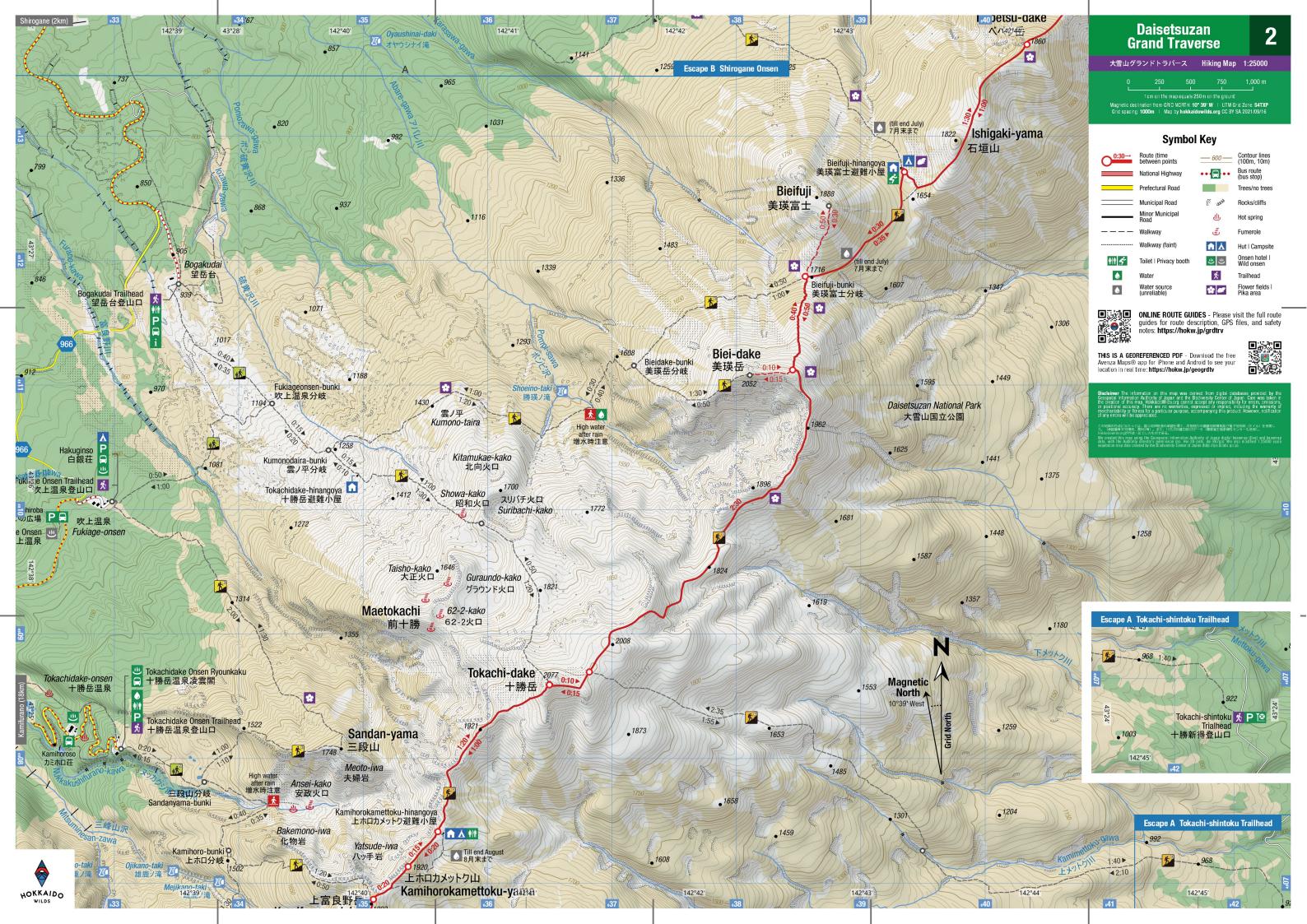
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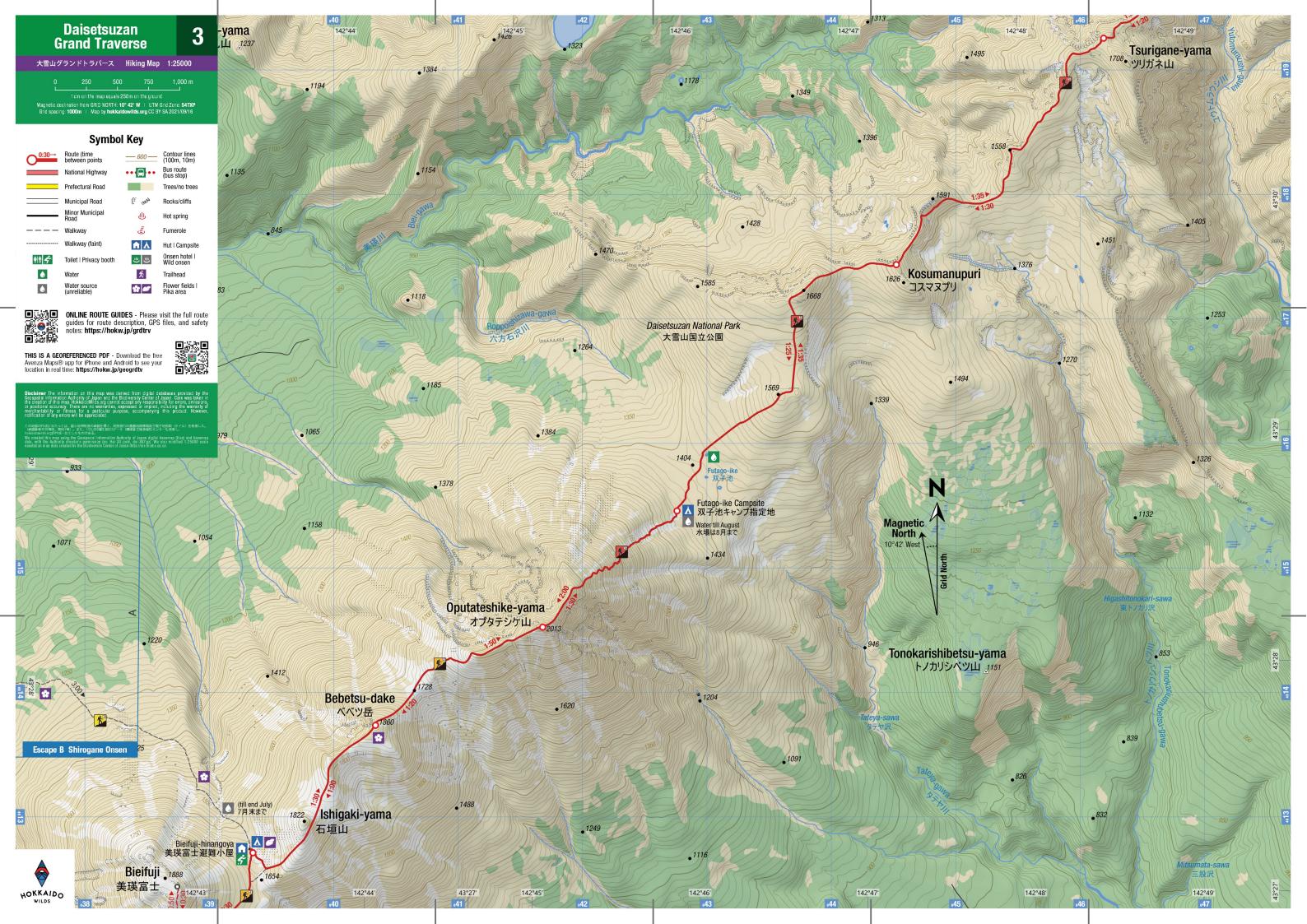
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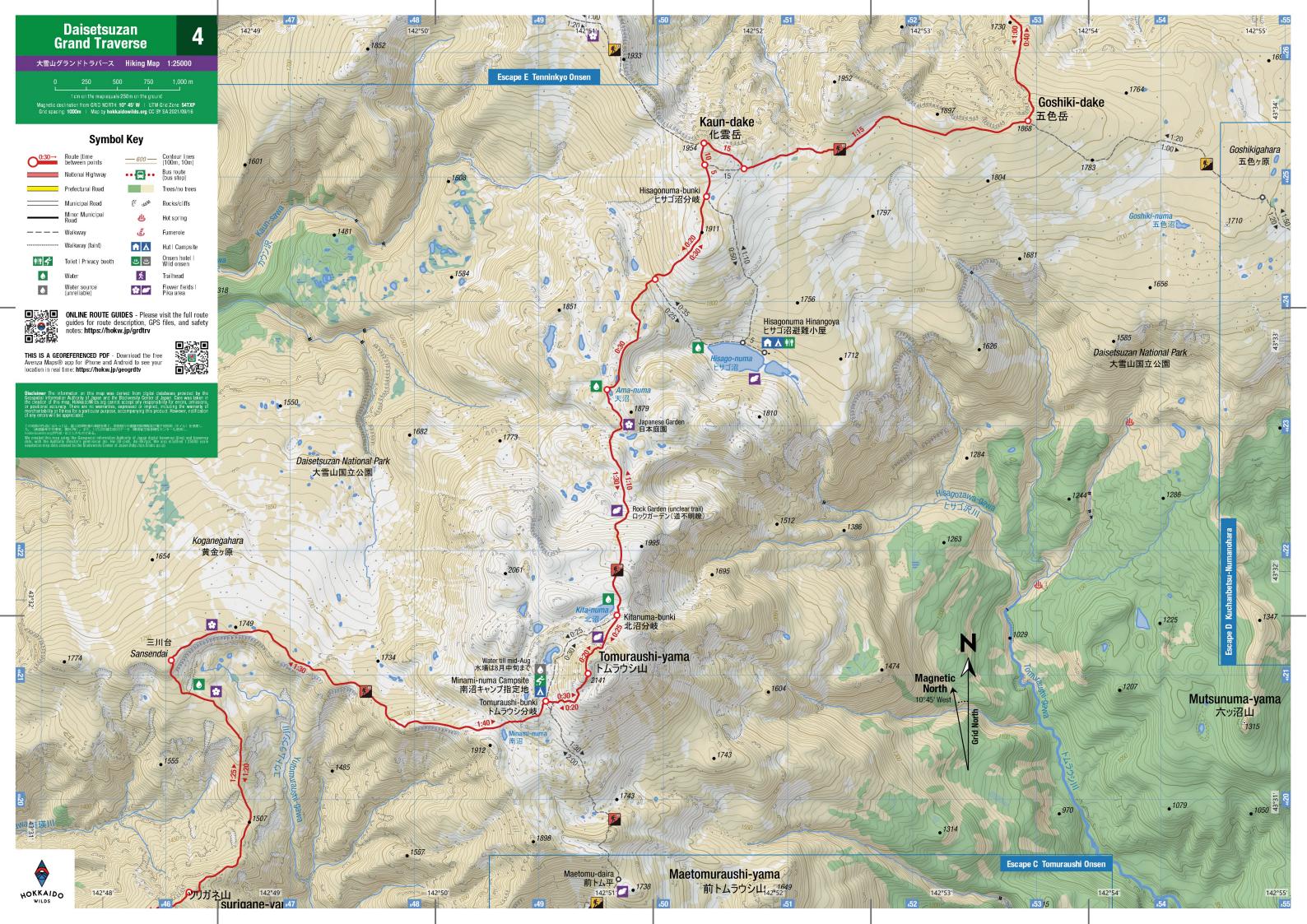


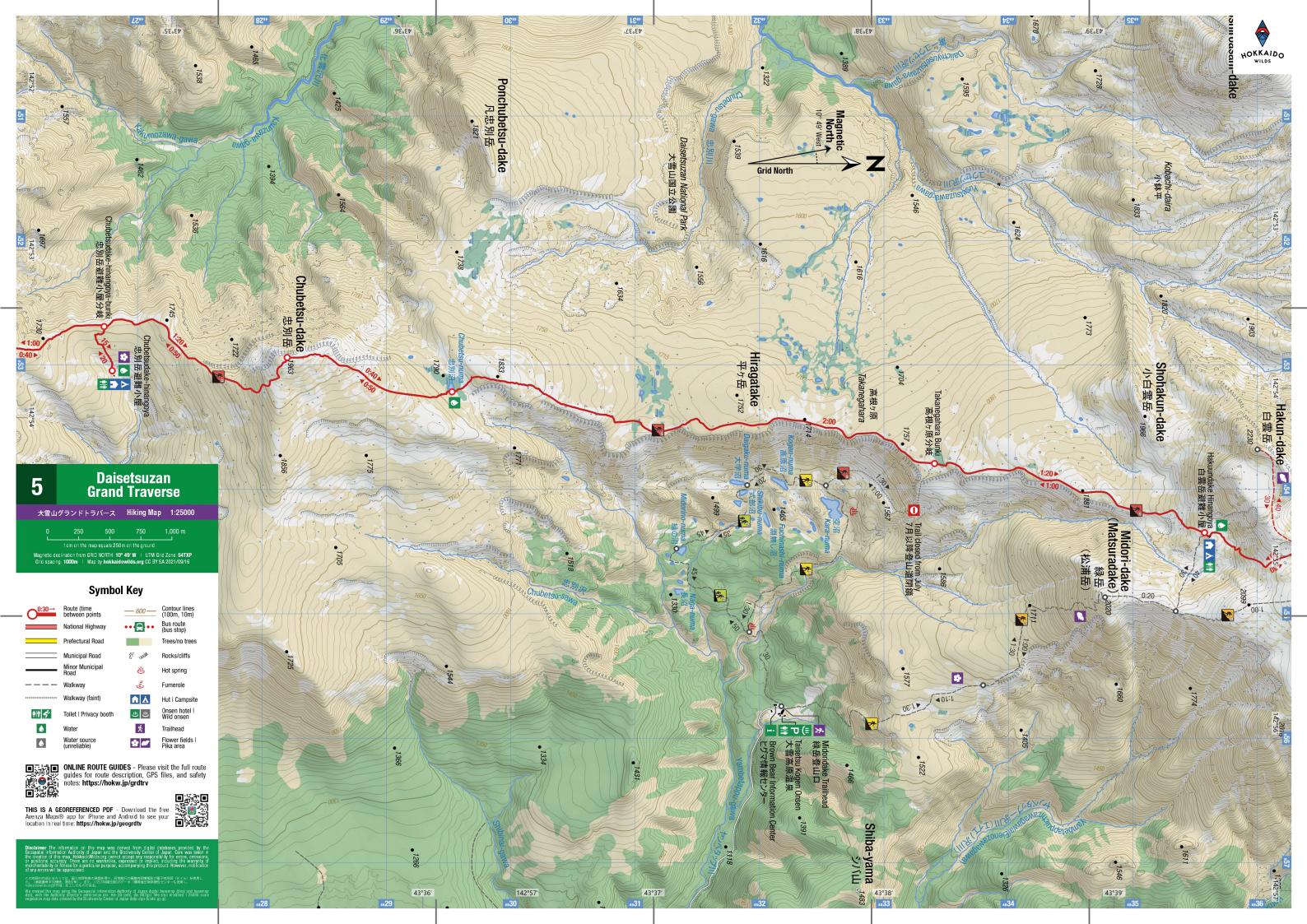
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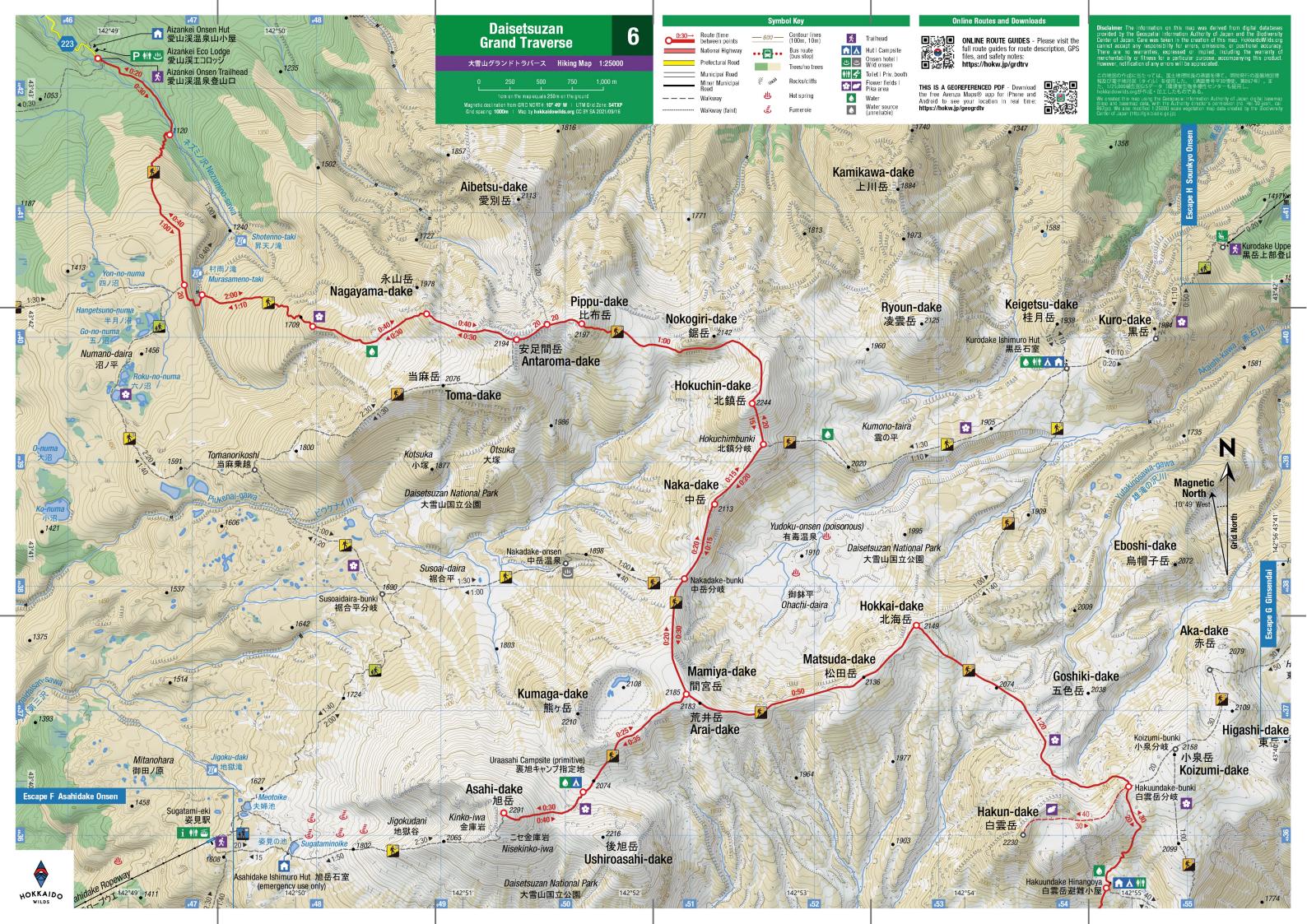












PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

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 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).

STEP 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.

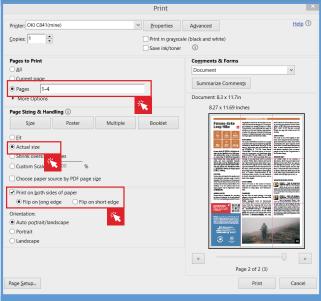


Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

