



Shakotan Coast

Irika ↔ Bikuni

積丹海岸

Sea Kayaking Map

1:25000





5-7hrs

Time



20km

Distance



7.5/10

Difficulty



4/5

Remoteness



4/5

Water clarity



Jun-Sep

Best season

The coast from Irika 入舸 to Bikuni 美国 on Shakotan Peninsula’s 積丹半島 remote northwestern coast is a sea kayaker’s dream. Pristine emerald blue water, towering rugged cliffs, cavernous caves, and curious wildlife. Beaches are equally rugged and remote, giving a true sense of getting away from it all. Exposed to the open sea with few options for escape, this one-day paddle requires good self-sufficiency, but rewards the well-equipped paddler in kind.

LOCATION
This route traces the northeastern coast of the Shakotan Peninsula, in western Hokkaido. Here we describe paddling from Irika to Bikuni (from north to south), but paddlers can of course paddle in the opposite direction – scout sea conditions and make a decision on the day. Given the summer prevailing wind from the southeast, however, paddlers may find more favourable conditions going from Bikuni to Irika (south to north). Bikuni is more convenient as a take-out, however, as there’s a park with toilets, a freshwater hose for rinsing gear, and a campground (free for overnight stays).

Put-in location: The put-in at Irika, adjacent to the Irika fishing port, consists of a moderately steep rocky beach. It’s less than the ideal spot to launch, but it’s as good as it gets this close to Shakotan-misaki Cape. Take care not to block the

gravel road, and don’t go beyond about 50m from the large gravel parking area – beyond that is private property.

Take-out location: The protected beach at the small settlement of Bikuni is a sea kayaker’s dream. It’s a free campground with clean toilets, an outdoor washing area, and taps with running fresh water. There’s also a massive car parking area. It’s a popular spot on weekends for recreational anglers and camping families. A short walk from the beach is a Seicomart convenience store and a number of local seafood restaurants.

GENERAL NOTES
The ruggedness and beauty of this high-level daytrip cannot be overstated. Caves, cliffs, birdlife, seals (if you’re lucky) and remote inlets await. Like most sea kayaking areas in Hokkaido, however, this coast is exposed to the open sea, with a large fetch extending all the way to Russia, 350km away to the west

across the Japan Sea – a careful consultation with weather apps leading up to and on the day of the paddle is essential.

Fishing ports: As per Hokkaido Bylaws, all fishing ports on this route (including Irika Fishing Port) are off-limits to kayaks and other small recreational craft, except in emergencies.

Weather and sea conditions: Shakotan Kayaks cautions of unpredictable easterly swells and reflective waves in the Horomui Bay, particularly when strong southeasterly winds have been blowing in Ishikari Bay the previous day. The *Yamakei Sea Kayaking Map* notes in spring and autumn, northwesterly winds are common, causing more challenging sea conditions (Kato, 2005, p. 24).

Cellphone reception: Mobile coverage is patchy at best along this stretch of coast. Carry a Satellite Messenger or PLB.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES
If allowing time for exploring caves, inlets, and passageways, it’s best to allot five to seven hours for this trip.

Clamber down to the rocky beach from the one-lane gravel road to the north of the Irika Fishing Port entrance. The beach is moderately steep, but not so steep as to be an issue (long double kayaks, however, may struggle in higher swell/waves). Soon after setting off, you’ll round Shakotan-misaki, which will be exposed to northerly swells and wind. In just under 3km, there’s the delightfully protected Shimamui-kaigan 島武意海岸, a fine-gravel beach flanked by high bluffs. You’ll likely be sharing this beach with tourists who have accessed the beach via the walkway and stairs to the south of the beach.

From Shimamui-kaigan to the small settlement of Horomui 幌武意, it’s a solid 4km paddle along an attractive cliff-bound coast. There’s nowhere to escape from the water until Horomui. Just after De-misaki Cape 出岬, there’s a conspicuously large sea cave, worth a visit. Another 2km or so beyond that is Joroko-iwa 女郎子岩, a towering rock spire jutting out of the sea. If landing at Horomui, be sure to land outside of the fishing port, and avoid camping in the area.

Makka-misaki Cape マツカ岬 can be somewhat of a border-line between rougher and calmer seas. If the conditions and tide allow it, consider squeezing through the narrow passage between the towering outer rock and the coast proper. Wind from the west can funnel through here at great speed, so take care.

Just beyond Makka-misaki is the lonely, deserted beach at Hamafumi 浜婦美. Topomaps indicate a foot trail from Route 913 high above the coast, but this trail is in a bad state of disrepair – it’s thoroughly overgrown and washed out in places. Suitable for passage only in the direst of circumstances, and even then only for fit parties. The Hamafumi beach is made up of small rocks, but there are a couple of spots here and there where hardy paddlers could make a rough camp for a night. For breaks and overnighting, opt for the northern end of the beach, away from the fishing huts (*banya*, 番屋) situated to the south. From Hamafumi to Biyano-misaki ビヤノ岬 is a mostly unbroken stretch of 7km of gorgeous high cliffs. The rock morphs from volcanic organ pipes to interesting gravely conglomerate, and everything in between. Between Itakiri-ishi 板切石 and Biyano-misaki are a number of inlets, all worthy of exploration.

Takara-jima 宝島 is an island, but is better

described as one enormous rock. The seaward side of the island is home to a large seabird colony. The southeastern side of the island is a popular diving spot. Just as you’re enjoying the beauty of the island, loud, intrusive broadcasts from regular tourist boats will jolt you into the realization that your time in remote solitude is over. The tourist boats make regular runs from Bikuni-gyoko fishing port 美国漁港 to just beyond Biyano-misaki and back. Take care crossing the entrance to Bikuni fishing port.

Landing at the beach at Bikuni-gyoko Park 美国漁港海岸緑地広場 should be straight forward – it is well sheltered.

TRANSPORT
By car | Shakotan Peninsula is easily accessed from Sapporo City via the Yoichi Expressway (or via the low roads). There’s plenty of parking at the southern end of the route at Bikuni-gyoko Park. At the northern end, at Irika, parking is more limited – there’s a gravel area just above the Irika fishing port, large enough for six or seven cars. Parking is not allowed in the port proper (access for local fishing operators only). If there’s no room to park in the gravel parking area, consider offloading kayaks and then parking somewhere in the township.
Public transport | There is local bus access to Bikuni (Bikuni-bashi bus stop 美国/バス停) and Irika (Shimamui-kaigan-iriguchi bus stop 島武意海岸入口バス停) from Sapporo City, run by Chuo Bus. There are a couple of buses per day – Google Maps has good coverage of the options.

SAFETY NOTES
This is a rugged and remote exposed-coast paddle, exposed to conditions on the Japan Sea. There’s very little in the way of escape

options should anything go wrong – paddlers should be self-sufficient and proficient in self- and group-rescue. Mobile phone reception is patchy at best. We highly recommend carrying a reliable form of communication (e.g., Satellite messenger or PLB).

ONSEN NEARBY
Shakotan Peninsula is home to a few really good onsen. If planning to be near Shakotan-misaki Cape, consider the amazing hilltop Misaki-no-yu 岬の湯 (900yen). They have a large relaxation area and offer meals. If you’ll be in Bikuni, or heading back to Sapporo, consider the lovely Furubira Onsen 日本海ふるびら温泉しおかぜ (550yen). ■

Japanese Map Glossary		
Romaji	Kanji	English
cho	町	town
dake/mine	岳/峯	peak
eki	駅	station
goya/koya	小屋	hut
gyoko	漁港	fishing port
ike	池	pond
iwa	岩	rock
kaigan	海岸	coast
kawa/gawa	川	river
ko/mizumi	湖	lake
ko	港	port
misaki	岬	cape
onsen	温泉	hot spring
sawa	沢	stream
shima	島	island
tani/dani	谷	valley
taki	滝	waterfall
today	灯台	lighthouse
toge	峠	pass
wan	湾	bay
yama/san/zan	山	mountain

ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

Please visit the full route guides for GPS files, interactive maps, and extra safety notes: <http://hokw.jp/iribi>



Disclaimer The information on this map was derived from digital databases provided by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan, the Japan Hydrological Association, 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. NAUTICAL CHART INFORMATION ON THIS MAP SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR MARINE NAVIGATION - PLEASE REFER TO OFFICIAL CHARTS.

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MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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Supported by







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.

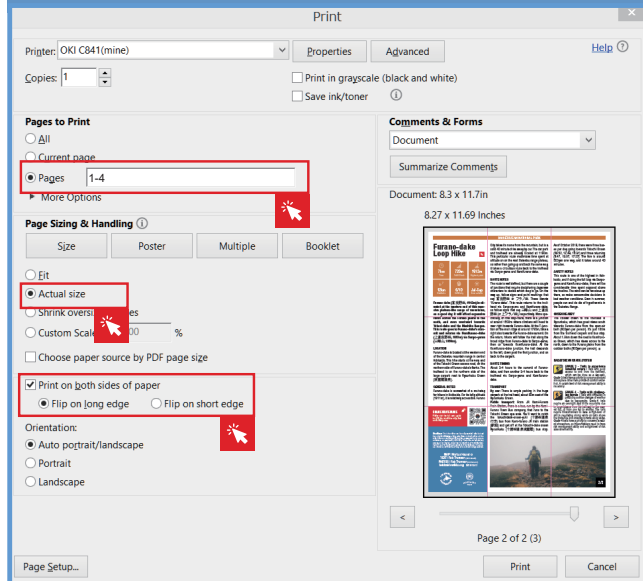
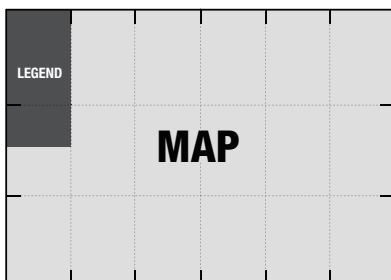


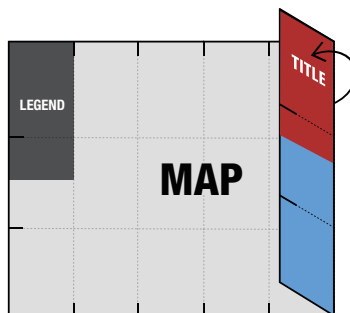
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

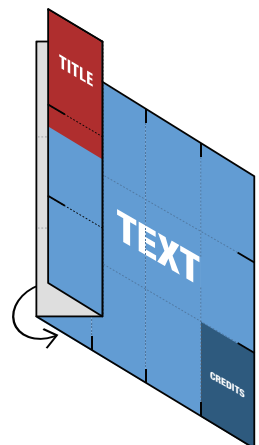
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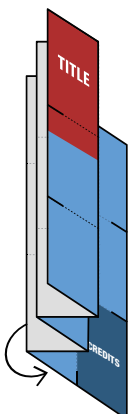
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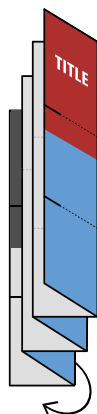
3



4



5



6



7

