

Iwanai-dake (NE Ridge)



 4.5hrs Time	 950m Total Climb	 1498m Highest point
 9km Distance	 6.5/10 Difficulty	 Feb-Apr Best season

Iwanai-dake 岩内岳 (1498m) is a conspicuous peak near the Japan Sea coast at the far western end of the Niseko Range. The northwestern ridge of the mountain offers some beautiful old-growth forest on its upper reaches, as well as a short and sharp alpine section. Views are spectacular across the Japan Sea and plains below. Snow quality can be some of the best in the range, if weather and timing favors you. With much of Iwanai-dake's northern aspect off limits to hikers, this route is a great way to experience what this unique, remote peak has to offer.

LOCATION

Iwanai-dake is a peak in the far western end of the Niseko Range in southwestern Hokkaido, Japan. This route up to the peak starts on the northeastern side of the mountain, far from the busier Iwanai Resort on the northern side.

GENERAL NOTES

The sprawling Iwanai Resort catski area on the northern side of Iwanai-dake limits somewhat skiing options for independent hikers seeking solid open freeski terrain – hikers are not allowed in the catski terrain to the north of the summit. This eastern side, however, offers just that – well-spaced old-growth forest and



a gloriously open alpine section. The lower stands of newer-growth forests is a little tight, however, and there is a simple river-crossing to contend with at the base of the route. The river is not much more than a trickle though, and in classic Hokkaido style, there's a plethora of concrete in the river – there are frequent man-made drops consisting of very handy concrete blocks that make for easy step-stones (you'll likely need to remove skis).

The normal caveats apply to this west-of-the-range route – being close to the Japan Sea, it will be more frequently and directly buffeted by seasonal storms. Pick your day well though, and it will deliver some of the range's best powder.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES

A simple up-and-back mission would likely take a fit party around 4.5 hours return.

Park up at the forestry road entrance, well to the side of the road so as to not block traffic (consider clearing a few meters more snow off to the side of the road). Head directly west to the Notaba-gawa 野束川 river, and follow it upstream to find a suitable spot to cross. There are a number of man-made drops, with concrete blocks that make suitable step-stones. If they're covered with pillows of snow, take care! You'll likely need to remove your skis for the crossing, but you shouldn't need to get your feet wet.

Once on the other side of the river, head southwest across the band of flat land before gaining the main, broad eastern ridge. Follow your nose up this broad ridge to the summit. You may find the eastern side of the summit ridge to have a large cornice, so wrap around to the north to gain the narrow summit ridge.

Descend the way you came.

TRANSPORT

By car: There is very limited parking for this route – skiers will likely be parked on the side of the road (which is technically illegal, but unheard of being enforced). Therefore, make the time to clear a few meters off the side of the road, so as to get your vehicle as far to the side of the road as possible.

Public transport: This route is not accessible by public transport.

SAFETY NOTES

Navigation is relatively straightforward on this route. If you're skiing from the summit in an easterly direction, you will end up at the river eventually. Note however that the Ichinosawa Creek gully 一の沢川 is deep and has steep gully walls. Keep to the main broad east-north-eastern ridge to be safe. The northeastern ridge will also be somewhat in the lee of storms, so care should be taken particularly after heavy snowfall and wind – slopes will likely be heavily wind-loaded. This will be particularly the case for the broad east-facing slope funneling into Ichinosawa-gawa. As noted above, Iwanai-dake's proximity to the Japan Sea means that any strong wind forecasts should be taken seriously – the coast takes a beating with winds straight out of Siberia.

ONSEN NEARBY

Okaerinasai Onsen おかえりなさい温泉 (800yen), at the base of the Iwanai Resort area, has a gloriously hot natural onsen, both indoors and an outdoor bath. The onsen is open to day visitors from 10am – 9pm (10am – 3pm on Saturdays). The outdoor pool is open from 3pm. Other than the Iwanai Resort area, there is a relative dearth of onsen in the immediate Iwanai area. ■



ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

Please visit the full route guide for GPS file, interactive map, and extra safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/iwanaiNE>



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.

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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 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.

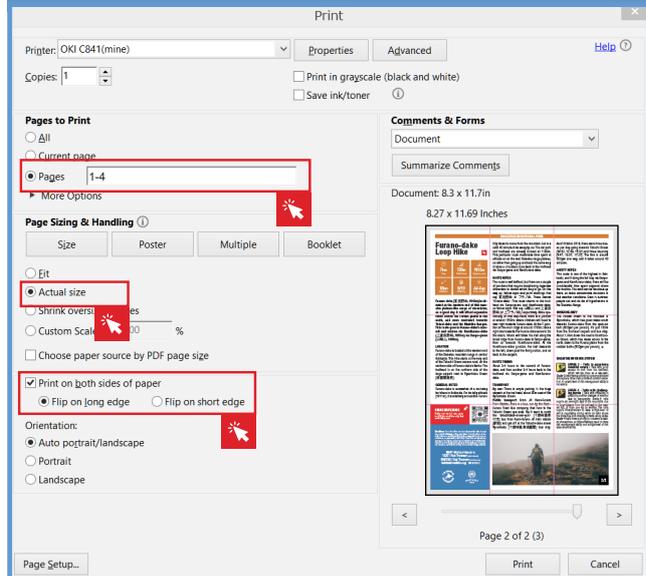


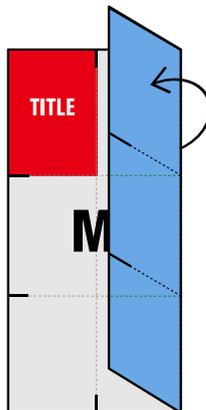
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size", and Pages 1-4 are selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

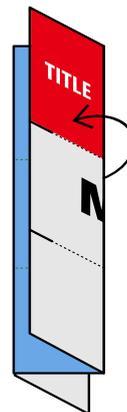
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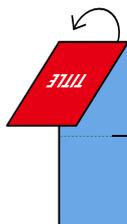
2



3



4



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