



Raiden-yama

North Ridge


雷電山北尾根 Ski Touring Map 1:25000






6hrs

Time




1100m

Total Climb




1212m

Highest point




13.5km

Distance



7/10

Difficulty



Mar-Apr

Best season

The Northern Ridge route up Raiden-yama 雷電山 (1212m) in the far western end of the Niseko Range is a gloriously-backdropped spring climb. With the Japan Sea shimmering below, its one of the more dramatic ski tours in the entire Niseko region. There is excellent spring skiing to be had here, and the views east along the range are second to none. Raiden’s flat, featureless summit proper is hardly worth writing home about, but the vast snow fields approaching it are. Ticking off this classic Niseko Range massif should be on all Hokkaido spring skiers’ hit lists.

LOCATION
Raiden-yama is the final major peak on the Niseko Range before the range plunges into the Japan Sea at the western terminus of the range, situated in southwestern Hokkaido. This route ascends the mountain from its northern side. In late spring, it’s possible to drive all the way to past the Narugami Falls, to a gravel clearing. Otherwise, this route begins at the Iwanai Regional Garbage Disposal Facility.

GENERAL NOTES
Raiden-yama’s summit is flat. It’s nondescript and doesn’t conjure up notions of heroism or grandeur. A summit is a summit, one might argue, worthy of

another notch in one’s belt. But it’s the setting that really sets Raiden-yama apart. This sprawling massif floats in the great Iwanai Bay on the Japan Sea. For the majority of the way up this North Ridge, this grand watery scene is the skier’s backdrop. On the descent, it is what pulls the skier down across broad snow fields and gloriously skiable wide ridges. Despite its lackluster summit, Raiden-yama is every bit worth the effort, particularly on a still, warm spring day.

Winter ascents of Raiden-yama are less heard of. With so much easy access powder to be enjoyed elsewhere in the range, it’s only the hardy that will take on the rimed, windpacked snow of the exposed Raiden ridges. To be sure, there is good skiing to be had in its many bowls. But come spring, the Niseko Range touring season best starts with setting one’s eyes on this gorgeous mountain.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES

In the spring months with well packed spring snow, skiers can expect about six hours for the return trip. In deep winter, it would be best to allow about seven hours return.

Head up towards the end of a non-descript gravel road, to around here. The road ends abruptly. From here, in early spring, it will be easy to traverse up onto the ridge proper. In late spring, it may be a fight through sasa bamboo grass up the embankment to the ridge. In reality, this is the crux of the entire route. The rest of the route is simply skiing uphill due south, arcing across the broad snow fields to the summit.

The descent is arguably trickier, and requires some careful checking of the map as one descends. It’s easy to get lured onto minor spurs and ridges, rather than the main ridge you climbed up. Taking the wrong ridge will eventually spit you out on the coast, but the Raiden-yama coast is a labyrinth of bluffs,

tight woods, and scant snow cover. Stick to the northern ridge and you won’t go wrong.

TRANSPORT
By car: There is limited parking for this route, and where you park will depend on when in the season you visit. In mid-winter, the road will only be cleared until the incinerator facility. In this case, make sure to park well to the side of the road, and don’t park right at the end of the snow-clearing (in order to allow room for the snowplows to turn around). If possible, consider clearing a few meters more off to the side of the road, in order to not take up too much room in the lane. In late spring, it’s possible to drive all the way to the small weir. This will save about 900m of walking.
Public transport: There is no public transport to this route. A taxi from the Iwanai Bus Terminal to the Narukami Falls 鳴神の滝 vicinity (about 6km, 15 mins) would be about 2000yen one way. The Narukami Falls is officially closed to the public due to trail degradation (and is of course not accessible by foot in winter anyway), so when speaking to the taxi driver, you may need to convince him or her that you do indeed want to go that way. Another point of reference for the taxi drivers is the Iwanai Garbage Incinerator facility 岩内地方清掃センター (*iwanai chihou seisou senta*).

SAFETY NOTES
This route is extremely exposed to coastal weather – wind conditions in the alpine are often much different to down below at the trailhead here on the coast. This route also involves considerable travel across broad, featureless, plateau-like ridges. Navigation will be extremely tricky in low visibility conditions. Note also this is a long day out. Ensure your


party is fit enough for the vertical gain and distance.

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/Raiden area on this northern side of the range. ■

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/raidenNTH>



Disclaimer


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TEXT, PHOTOS, MAP | Rob Thomson

hokkaidowilds.org 2023/01/17

MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | @welldonegan

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雷電山北尾根 Ski Tour Map 1:25000

0 250 500 750 1,000 m

1cm on the map equals 250m on the ground

Magnetic declination from GRID NORTH: 9°54' W | MGRS Zone: **54TUN**
Grid spacing: **100m** | Map by hokkaidowilds.org CC BY SA 2023/01/17

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Symbol Key

<p> Ascent/Ski-tour Route (time) *</p> <p> Freeride Route *</p> <p> Advanced Route *</p> <p> National Highway</p> <p> Provincial Highway / Gate</p> <p> Municipal Road</p> <p> Minor Municipal Road</p> <p> Forestry Road</p> <p> Bus route / Stop</p> <p> Ski lift / Abandoned ski lift</p> <p> Municipal boundary</p> <p> Power lines</p>	<p> Contour lines (100m, 10m)</p> <p> Cliffs / Bluff / Rocks</p> <p> Trees / No trees</p> <p> Buildings</p> <p> Backcountry gates</p> <p> Ploughed parking / Osen facility</p> <p> Shop / Public toilet</p> <p> Hut / Campground</p> <p> Shrine / Temple</p> <p> Hot spring / Fumarole</p> <p> Transmission tower</p>
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* Dashed route line denotes technical skill required (adverse surface conditions, very high exposure to avalanche/falls etc).

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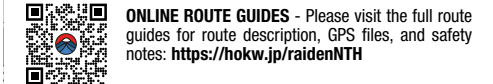
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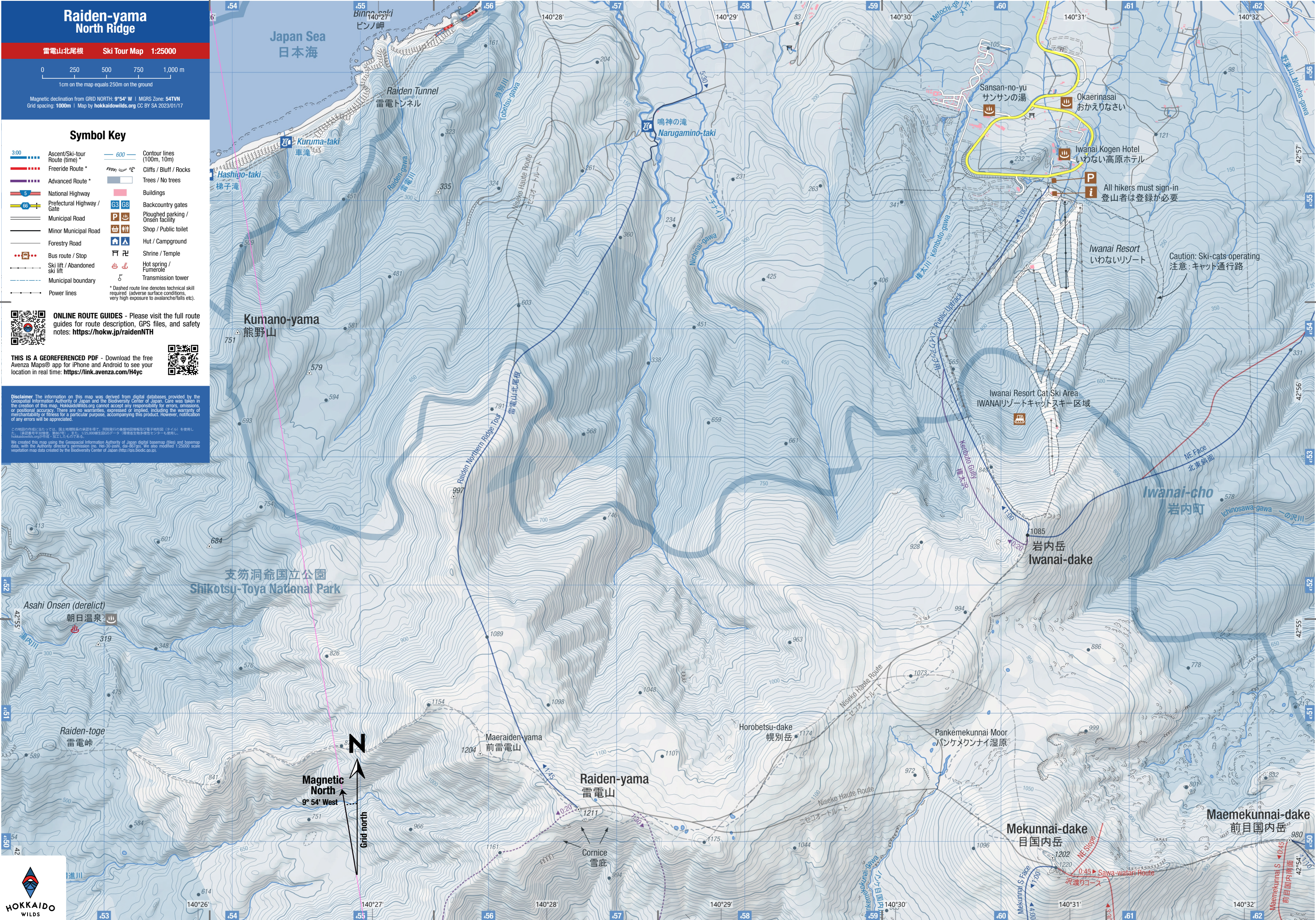
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We created this map using the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan digital basemap (tiles) and basemap data, with the Authority director's permission (no. Hei-30-joshi_dai-867go). We also modified 1:25000 scale vegetation map data created by the Biodiversity Center of Japan (<http://gis.biodic.go.jp>).



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.

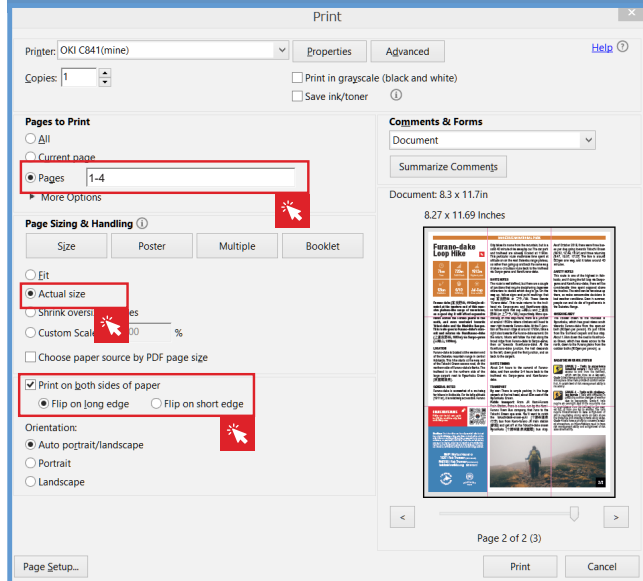
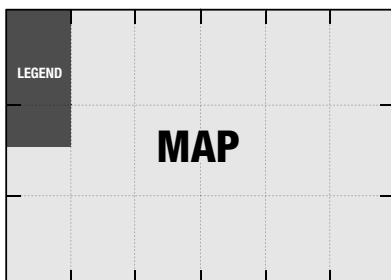


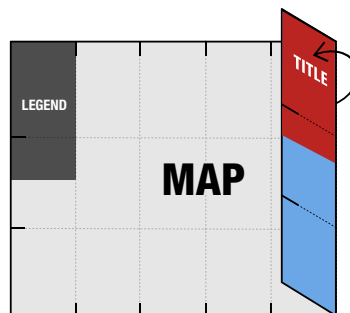
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

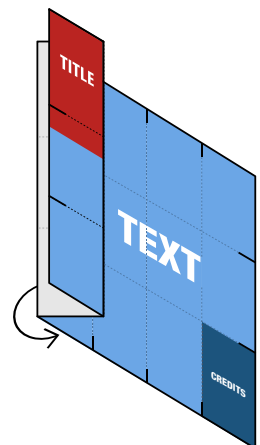
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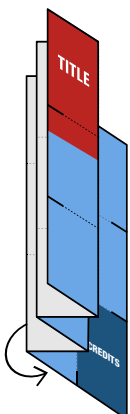
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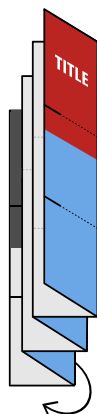
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6



7

