



# Yotei-zan 148go-no-sawa

羊蹄山 148 号の沢 Ski Touring Map 1:25000



8hrs  
Time



1580m  
Total Climb



1884m  
Highest point



13km  
Distance



8.5/10  
Difficulty



Feb-Apr  
Best season

**Yotei-zan's 148go-no-sawa 羊蹄山 148号の沢 is a somewhat folkloric volcanic erosion gully on the aesthetically brutal north face of this impressively conical mountain near Niseko, Japan. It offers 1300m of steep, thrilling vertical descent. Of all the technical, rarely-skied gullies on this somewhat menacing-looking north-aspect mountainside, it's the one skied most often. It's one of the few gullies on this side of the mountain that offer wide open slopes, and 'goes' even lower down. A classic terrain trap, on a side of the mountain that bears the brunt of storms, this run requires patience, timing, and utmost care.**

## LOCATION

Yotei-zan is a large free-standing conical volcano about 9km east of the bustling ski resort town of Niseko, in southwestern Hokkaido. This route starts on the northern side of the mountain, rather off the beaten track in a quiet farming community. If running a shuttle, it's sometimes preferable to ascend the northeastern side of the mountain (the Kyogoku Route) and descend the north.

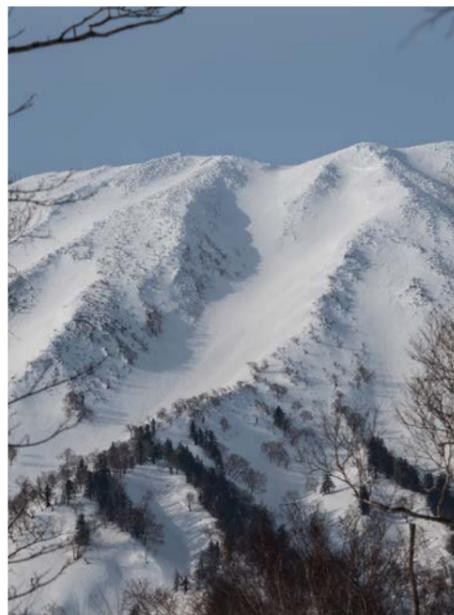
## GENERAL NOTES

This 148go-no-sawa gully on Yotei-zan is arguably the most often skied (if skied at all) gully on the northern aspect of the mountain. Standing at the mouth of



the gully at the crater rim, it's not hard to see why. The upper 30% or so of the descent is gloriously wide open, relatively sheltered from the blazing winds on this side of the peak. The remaining 70% of the gully is still relatively wide and there's nothing terribly technical beyond two easily avoidable waterfalls (take extra care earlier in the season). At no point does the run descend into type-two adventure skiing fun (although earlier in the season with less of a base things can get hairy). It's a truly inspiring run, up there with the best in Hokkaido.

All that said, the northern aspect of Yotei-zan is relatively rarely skied. Reasons for this are mainly two-fold: 1) this side of the mountain gets absolutely hammered by seasonal winter storms, and 2) it's a labyrinth of committing, relatively dangerous, and technical gullies. The first point means finding a suitable window for skiing the northern aspect in safe snowpack conditions can be relatively challenging. The



second point means anything you do ski on this aspect will necessarily be considerably exposed to terrain trap hazards. The ridges and spurs are always wind-scoured, and narrow, so it's either full commitment or nothing at all – other aspects on the mountain offer much more control for the skier to dial up or down the exposure. Not so here.

## ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES

In spring, this can be a sub-7hr return trip. If attempting this in deep winter, add on a solid hour or two to be safe.

From the end of the snow clearing, head due south on the snowed-in road for about 800m before the road disappears. Continue south, and then south-southwest, climbing ever so gently. The idea is to gain the prominent spur to the looker's left of the 148go-no-sawa gully. This spur is very wide and the start, but narrows to a very tight, wooded spur at around the 1000m mark. Depending on the snow



## NISEKO REGION

conditions, it may be near impossible to skirt round trees and shrubs on the spur without agitating isolated wind-drifts and cornices. In this case, you'll need to move onto the more exposed open slopes. In spring, these slopes can be very icy, so boot crampons should be assumed to be essential to carry on this route.

In relation to that point, if you have the option to run a car shuttle, it can often be more convenient to ascend the Kyogoku Route, to avoid the tight spurs on this northern aspect ascent. It's only a short walk around the crater rim from where the Kyogoku Route hits the rim, to the drop point into the 148go-no-sawa.

After navigating the variable surface conditions beyond the 1200m mark to the crater rim, either drop into the crater for a crater run, or just focus on the gully descent. The first 100m or so of the descent may be rimed and bulletproof snow, but conditions will inevitably improve as you are swallowed further into the gully. Follow your nose as the gully becomes more constricted. There's waterfalls/bluffs at around 905m and 800m – head high up on the gully wall to the skier's right of these to avoid them. If you're skiing it in the spring, the gully will be properly filled in and it's more or less a breeze. In the earlier months (early Feb or before), you'll need to be more aware of the possibility of ill-formed gully floors.

Once at around 600m in altitude, the gully walls drop enough to be able to gain the skier's right ridge again – the one you skied up. Find your skin track and follow it back to the road.

## TRANSPORT

**By car:** Park up well to the side of the road



near but not at the end of the snow clearing, also taking care not to block the intersection. There is a sign attached to a power pole instructing people not to park at the end of the snow clearing.

**Public transport:** There is no public transport to this route.

## SAFETY NOTES

This is a route with very high consequences should anything go wrong. Being a classic terrain trap, avalanche consequences will be extremely high. Skiers should be very confident in the snowpack if attempting this route. Also note that any unforeseen injuries in the gully will be very consequential in terms of search and rescue – SAR teams may struggle

to access incapacitated individuals, and given the height of the gully walls, rescue helicopters may also struggle to render aid. This is all to say, this is a route skiers should be very careful of, with a full understanding of the hazards and consequences involved.

## ONSEN NEARBY

The closest onsen to this route is the beautiful Kyogoku Onsen 京極温泉 (600yen). There's a restaurant attached. While you won't be able to see the line you skied, there is a great view of Yotei-zan from the outdoor baths. ■

## Japanese Map Glossary

Romaji	Kanji	English
bunki cho	分岐町	junction town
dake/mine eki	岳/峯 駅	peak station
goya/koya hinangoya	小屋 避難小屋	hut 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/yotei148>



**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

[hokkaidowilds.org](https://hokkaidowilds.org) 2023/02/11

MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | @welldonegan

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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.

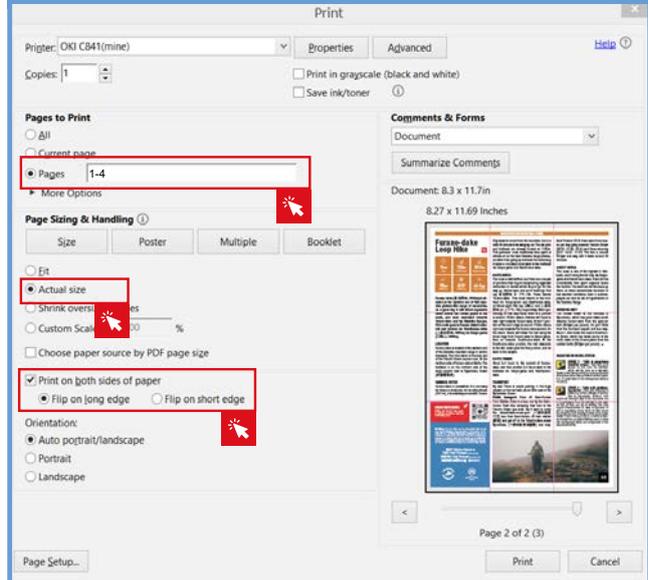
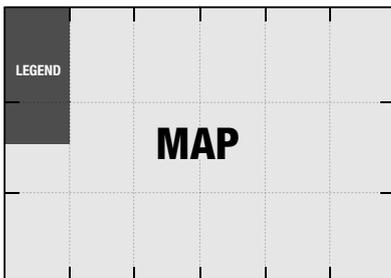


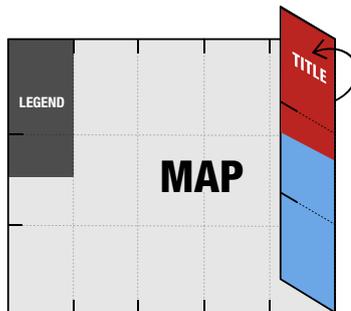
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

## ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

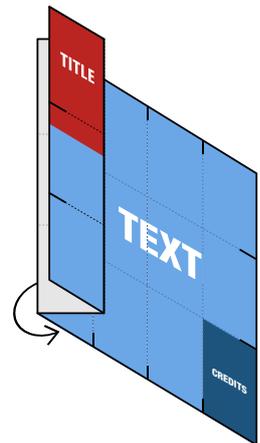
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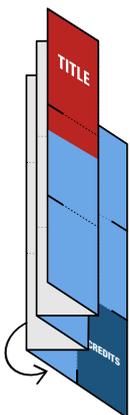
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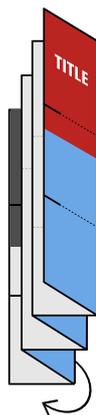
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4



5



6



7

