




Akan-ko

阿寒湖 Paddling Map 1:25000







4hrs
Time




14km
Distance




5/10
Difficulty



3/5
Remoteness



4/5
Water clarity



Jun-Oct
Best season

Lake Akan 阿寒湖, within the Akan-Mashu National Park 阿寒摩周国立公園, is a pristine lake surrounded by dense primordial forest in eastern Hokkaido, Japan. The lake is home to rare *marimo* マリモ, a protected species of moss balls. The surrounding forest is untouched, the Oakan-dake volcano towers over the lake at the eastern end. It's unlikely you'll see anyone else paddling on this expansive, beautiful lake. You'll be sharing the shoreline with eagles, kingfishers, and native deer. The adjacent Akan-kohan Village 阿寒湖畔 has deep ties with the Ainu indigenous people of Hokkaido. It is one of Hokkaido's Ainu cultural hubs, with many opportunities to learn about this vibrant indigenous way of life and people.

LOCATION
Lake Akan is a 26km-circumference lake at 420m in altitude in the far east of Hokkaido, about 4.5hrs (300km) east of

Sapporo City. The lake has a maximum depth of 45m (average 18m). Visibility is about 5m. This paddling route on the lake starts just west of the small Akan-kohan Village on the southern shoreline of Lake Akan.

Put-in location: The put-in for this Lake Akan paddling route is essentially the only public put-in on the lake for paddlers. It's about 100m north of the Lake Akan tourist boat maintenance yards. There's a narrow gravel road to a very picturesque coarse-sand beach with fantastic views east across the lake to Oakan-dake 雄阿寒岳 (1370m). There's very limited parking at the put in. Paddlers will typically park on the side of the gravel access road. It is possible, however, to drive onto the beach for loading/unloading of boats.

Take-out location: This is an out-and-back loop trip, so you'll be taking out on the same picturesque beach you put in at.

GENERAL NOTES
On the approach to Lake Akan, you'd be forgiven for thinking you're driving deeper and deeper into the Hokkaido wilderness, with no prospect of escape – the forest is untouched, primordial, and beautiful. All of a sudden, however, you'll be spat out of the cool, shady woods into a bustling tourist trap of a village – Akan-kohan Village 阿寒湖畔 – on the southern shoreline of the lake. Expect small shops selling Ainu trinkets and carvings, alongside colossal hotels. It's a nice enough village to wander around though, and a great opportunity to get a glimpse into one of the main Ainu cultural hubs of Hokkaido.

Northeast access restrictions: Vessels (including paddlecraft) without permits are not permitted in Churui Bay チュウルレイ湾 nor Kinetanpe Bay キネタンペ湾 in the far northeast corner of the lake. This is to protect

endangered marimo moss-balls in the area (see Section 2-l 1 (1)/(2) of the Akan National Park Akan Area Management Plan). Note that while motorized vessels without permits are prohibited to enter the wider National Park Special Protection Zone 国立公園特別保護地区 in the northeast, this restriction does not apply to non-motorized vessels.

Southeast access restrictions: The large tourist ferry and sightseeing motorboats launch from multiple locations along the Akan-kohan Village shoreline. In correspondence with the Ministry of Environment Lake Akan Management Office and Akan Nature Center, we were informed that paddlecraft should avoid crossing tourist ferry routes during ferry operation hours (daily, 8am-5pm). Therefore, paddlers seeking to paddle the southern shoreline should do so before 8am or after 5pm. Note that smaller sightseeing motorboats can be active from as early as 6am.

Paddlecraft on Lake Akan: It's relatively rare to see paddlecraft on Lake Akan. While canoeing is encouraged on the lake (see Section 2-l 1 (2) of the Akan National Park Akan Area Management Plan), rules regarding where

paddlecraft are allowed on the lake appear not to be well defined nor understood. Rules are certainly not well communicated. To avoid any misunderstandings, we advise to either just paddle the west and northwestern end of the lake, or if you're keen to circumnavigate the lake, make sure to avoid the southern shore-line during ferry operating hours. At all times, paddlecraft should hug the shoreline.

Put-in/take-out locations: As noted above, there's only one put-in/take-out location on the lake for paddlecraft, on the beach just west of the tourist ferry boatyard. The gravel road along the northern shoreline is under the purview of the Maeda Ippoen Foundation, and requires a permit to use – therefore, in an emergency, paddlers should not expect to escape from the lake anywhere but the southern shoreline.

Maeda Ippoen Foundation Forests: The forests on the northern, western and southern sides of the lake are managed by the Maeda Ippoen Foundation 前田一歩園財団, and require a permit to enter. The actual shoreline of the lake, however, is classified as National Forest 国有林, so it is possible and acceptable to land (i.e., take a break) on the beaches on the lake shoreline.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES
Completely above-board western loop paddle (up to 10km, 3-4hrs): The Akan Nature Center advises paddlers to stick to the western half of the lake, in order to avoid encounters with gaudy motorboats, the incongruously large tourist ferry, and misunderstandings regarding paddlecraft rules on the lake. Put in at the beach at the southwestern end of the lake, and paddle northwest along the shoreline for about 1km. From the 1km point, you can either continue paddling along the shoreline, or cut across about 800m of open water to the northern shoreline. Yaitai-to Island ヤイタイ島 is an easy 200m from the shore, so is worth paddling out to. It's possible to paddle another 3km northeast along the northern shoreline to near Churui-to Island チュウルレイ島. Return the way you came, along the shoreline.

Full circumnavigation (26km): For a full 26km circumnavigation of the lake, we recommend putting in as early as possible – preferably no later than 5am – and paddling in a counter-clockwise direction around the lake. This will get the problematic southern shoreline out of the way early in the morning, avoiding encounters with sightseeing boats.

TRANSPORT
By car | There is limited parking at the put-in beach. Paddlers will typically park on the side

of the gravel access road, but make sure to park as far as possible to the side of the road so as to not block traffic. It is possible to drive onto the beach for loading/unloading.
Public transport | Lake Akan is accessible by public bus from Kushiro JR train station. The nearest bus stop to the put-in beach is Akanko Bus Center 阿寒湖バスセンター. Google Maps has up to date timetabling information. From the Akanko Bus Center it's a 2km walk to the put-in beach.

SAFETY NOTES
While Lake Akan is not a huge lake, there is nonetheless plenty of fetch across the lake which will allow for some considerable waves if the wind is up. Escape options from the lake are very limited. The only shoreline accessible by vehicle is a small part of the southern side of the lake, so pay attention to the weather forecast to make sure you'll have favourable conditions for the entirety. There are a lot of commercial sightseeing boats on the lake, including a couple of large ferries and lots of


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

small motorboats shaped like missiles (don't ask why...it's peak 1990's bubble economy aesthetic). There are also fishing boats active on the lake. These commercial vessels on the lake will not be expecting to see paddlers anywhere on the lake, particularly at the southeastern corner of the lake. Either avoid paddling the eastern end of the lake, or if you must, be out of the area before 8am. At all times, paddlers should strive to hug the shoreline to avoid powered vessels.

ONSEN NEARBY
The onsen closest to the lake at Akan are comparatively expensive compared to other locations in Hokkaido, but the views are really quite incredible. Try the New Akan Hotel ニュー阿寒ホテル (1,250yen) for great onsen and an amazing infinity onsen pool (mixed-gender). There's also the swanky Tsuruga hotels, such as the Tsuruga Wings Hotel 鶴雅ウィングズホテル (1,650yen). ■

ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

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




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.

MAP, TEXT, PHOTOS | Rob Thomson


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MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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HOKKAIDO
WILDS

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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.



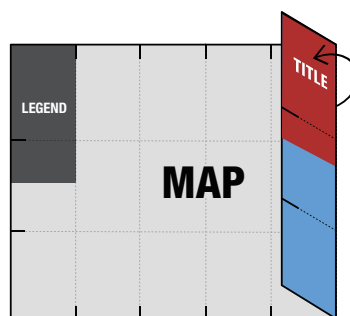
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

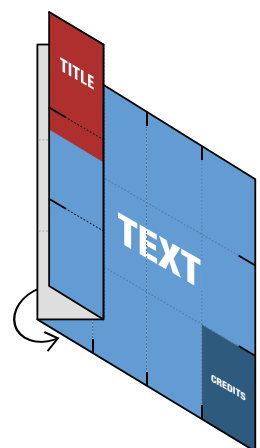
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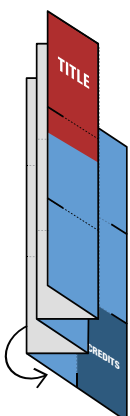
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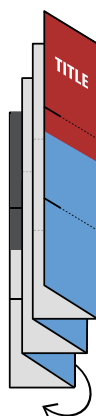
3



4



5



6



7

