




Etai-dake

恵岱岳 Ski Touring Map 1:25000







6hrs
Time




950m
Total Climb




1060m
Highest point



14km
Distance



6.5/10
Difficulty



Feb-Mar
Best season

Etai-dake 恵岱岳 (1060m) is a prominent tabletop mountain sitting at the far northeast edge of the impressive Mashike mountain range 増毛山地. Its broad northeast-facing slopes below the flat summit stand out against the sky when viewed from the Etai Pass road. The approach to the main skiing face is along an undulating forestry road, but once you’re at the northeast face, it’s perfect for lapping. Views west towards Shokanbetsu-dake 暑寒別岳 (1492m), and north to the Japan Sea are stellar on a clear day.



LOCATION

Etai-dake is at the northeast corner of the Mashike Range on the Japan Sea coast of Hokkaido, about 2hrs drive north of Sapporo City. This ski tour starts at a small ploughed parking bay about 3km west of Etaihetsu Dam, on Route 94 heading west towards Mashike Town. Route 94 is open during the winter, but closes sporadically during heavy snow events.

GENERAL NOTES

The summit of Etai-dake is perhaps the only accessible vantage point to gaze upon the broad northeast faces of Shokanbetsu-dake. The skin along the access road to the base of Etai-dake is about 3km long, and is undulating (you'll need skins on for the approach and the exit), but as far as bang-for-your-buck in the Mashike Range, Etai-dake is arguably the best. This is particularly so in the deep winter months, where forays into the Mashike Range are usually nearly impossible due to storms and the sheer distance of approaches.

This ski tour is not all about the views though. That undulating forestry road approach allows access to some sublime lapping terrain. The final 200m vertical climb to the summit in particular is satisfyingly steep. The face is broad enough that it won’t track out quickly. The snow can be as good as it gets on this northern Japan Sea coast.

Best season: Note that it’s not until around mid-February that the snow bridges across Etaihetsu-gawa River will be fully developed.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES

For a simple up-and-back trip for fit skiers, this trip is likely to take around four to five hours. Add in a couple more hours if you’re planning to lap the upper slopes.

From the ploughed parking bay, head about 500m west-southwest across the snowfield to join the forestry road. Walk about 2km along the forestry road, and drop down to your left (south) towards Etaihetsu-gawa River just after the first stream marked on the map (about 100m west of the 394m elevation point). The



main issue here is crossing Etaihetsu-gawa River. Too early in the season, the snow bridges will not be formed properly, and you’ll need to wade across. From about mid-February onwards, you should be able to find suitable snow bridges to use to cross.

Once across the river, you’ll have a short steep section of slope to zig-zag up. Keep heading towards the looker’s right of the cliff band and you’ll eventually emerge onto a beautiful mellow slope, surrounded by gorgeous old-growth forest. From here it’s about a 1 hour wander along the looker’s left of a shallow gully. You’ll very soon see the steep final pitch to the summit, so just follow your nose south and then south-southwest uphill.

The final 150m ascent up the steep northeast slope under the summit looks sketchy in terms of wind-loading, and for the most part, it is. It might also appear that the summit is blockages by large cornices. There is, however, a shallow ridge-like feature with sparse trees at around gird-reference 522409. Once you’re at the base of the climb, you’ll see it. This generally allows for a less exposed ascent to the summit plateau, with a break in the cornice. Once you’re on the summit plateau, we recommend walking a few hundred meters northwest to get views of the Japan Sea.

For the descent, just follow your up-track. If you’re confident of the snowpack stability, you can lap the 200m or so of northeast slope to

your heart’s content. Note that once you’re back on the forestry road, you’ll need to don skins again – the road undulates up and down somewhat.

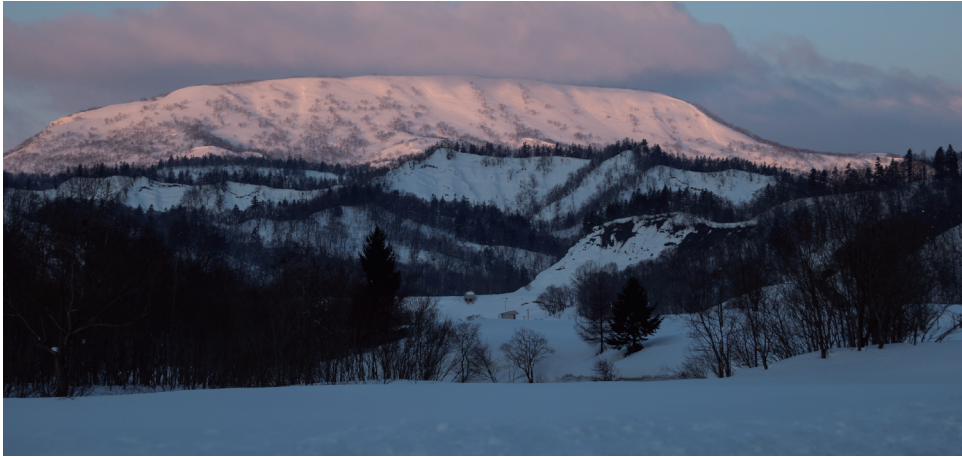
TRANSPORT

By car: Route 94 from Hokuryu Town (in the east) or Mashike Town (in the west) affords easy access to the trailhead. Note that while Route 94 is open during the winter, it closes sporadically during heavy snow events. Check the Hokkaido road closure website for current status (if there are no markings on Route 94, you’re good to go). There is room to park about 5-6 cars in a ploughed parking bay. If your party is arriving in more than one vehicle, we recommend parking two cars deep (parking one vehicle in) to maximize space for other parties to park.

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

SAFETY NOTES

The final northeast slope below the Etai-dake summit is generally in the lee of storms.



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

This means that while the snow can be very good, the slope is capped by large cornices, and the slope can generally be more wind-loaded than others in the area. This all adds up to a particularly avalanche-prone slope. We recommend performing a pit-check to get a feeling for the stability of the slope. Even then, there are shallow gully-like features on the slope that will lead to isolated pockets of instability in the right conditions.

ONSEN NEARBY

The Sunflower Park Hokuryu Hot Spring サンフラワーパーク 北竜温泉 (500yen) in Hokuryu Town, with its enigmatic double-dragon gate (Hokuryu literally means *north dragon*), is worth a post-ski soak. It’s only about 20 minutes drive from the trailhead back towards Takikawa (east). They have an outdoor bath, mist/dry saunas, a large relaxation area, and an attached restaurant. They also have accommodation. ■

ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

Please visit the full route guides for GPS files, interactive maps, and extra safety notes: <https://bit.ly/etaidake>



Disclaimer The information on this map was derived from digital data-bases 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 2024/03/22

MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | @welldonegan

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Etai-dake

恵岱岳Ski Tour Map1:25000

02505007501,000 m

1cm on the map equals 250m on the ground

Mag. declination from GRID NORTH: 10°4' W (-3' per year) | MGRS Zone: 54TWP
Grid spacing: 1000m | Map by hokkaidowilds.org CC BY SA 2024/03/22

Symbol Key

3:00

Ascent/Ski-tour Route (time) *

Freeride Route *

Advanced Route *

National Highway

Prefectural Highway / Gate

Municipal Road

Minor Municipal Road

Forestry Road

Bus route / Stop

Ski lift / Abandoned Ski lift

Municipal boundary

Power lines

600

Contour lines (100m, 10m)

Cliffs / Bluff / Rocks

Trees / No trees

Buildings

Backcountry gates

Ploughed parking / Onsen facility

Shop / Public toilet

Hut / Campground

Shrine / Temple

Hot spring / Fumerole

Transmission tower

* Dashed route line denotes technical skill required (adverse surface conditions, very high exposure to avalanche/falls etc).

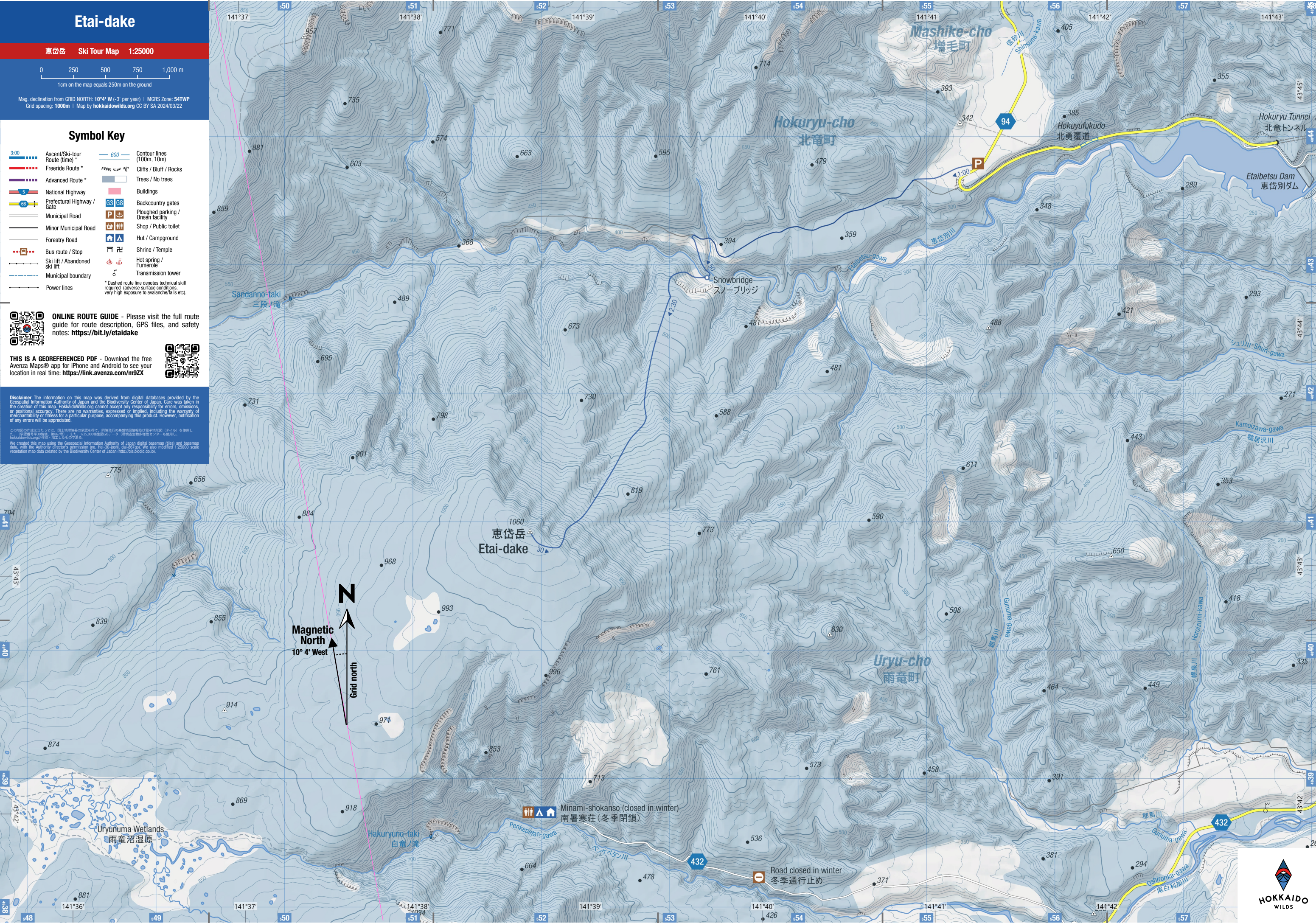
ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE - Please visit the full route guide for route description, GPS files, and safety notes: <https://bit.ly/etaidake>

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We created this map using the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan digital basemap (tiles) and basemap data, with the Authority's express permission (no. 160-20-2016, date: 2016/10/20). We also modified 1:25000 scale vegetation map data created by the Biodiversity Center of Japan (<http://ais.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.

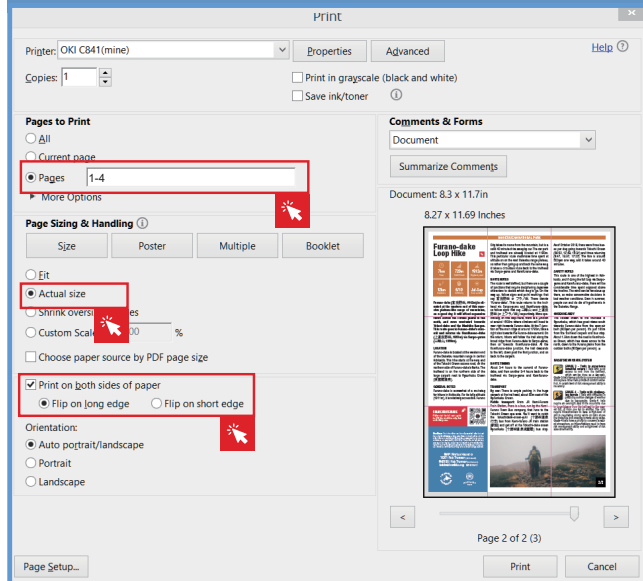
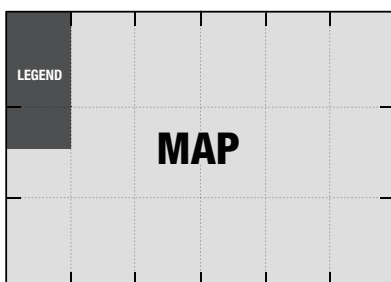


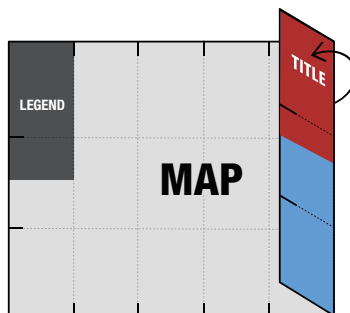
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

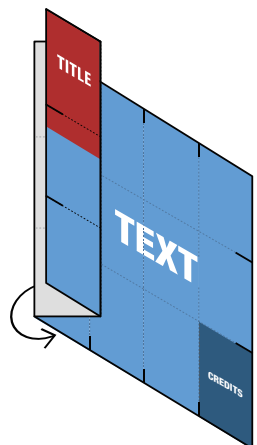
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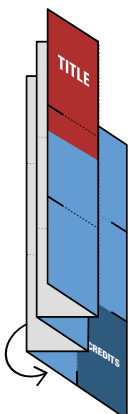
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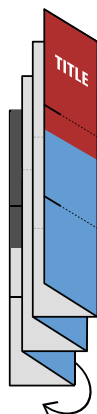
3



4



5



6



7

