

History of the Earth, Exposed

Samani, Hokkaido

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MA
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Samani-cho Town Hall

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Samani Official Website

<http://www.samani.jp/>

Mt. ApoiGeopark Official Website

<http://www.apoi-geopark.jp/>

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2015 UNESCO World Geopark Certified

Mt. Apoi Geopark Town
Samani, Hokkaido

Photos: 4th Samani Photo Contest Entries "The Arts of the Samani Gods" (Mt. Kannon enveloped in cloud sea)



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Mt. Apoi
UNESCO
Global Geopark

Gifts from deep within the earth can be found here.

"Daichino Koen," is a certified UNESCO World Geopark



"Geo" is a word that describes the earth and vast land. Scientifically important or natural parks with significant beauty, geography or geological features is deemed a "Geopark." The entire town of Samani is considered the Mt. Apoi Geopark. This highly valuable natural heritage and rich natural environment offer an

opportunity to learn of the historical culture of the area, while enjoying all of its potential. Mt. Apoi Geopark was certified as a geopark of Japan in 2008. In September, 2015 it was the eighth in Japan, and the second beyond the Tohoku area, to be recognized as a UNESCO World Geopark.

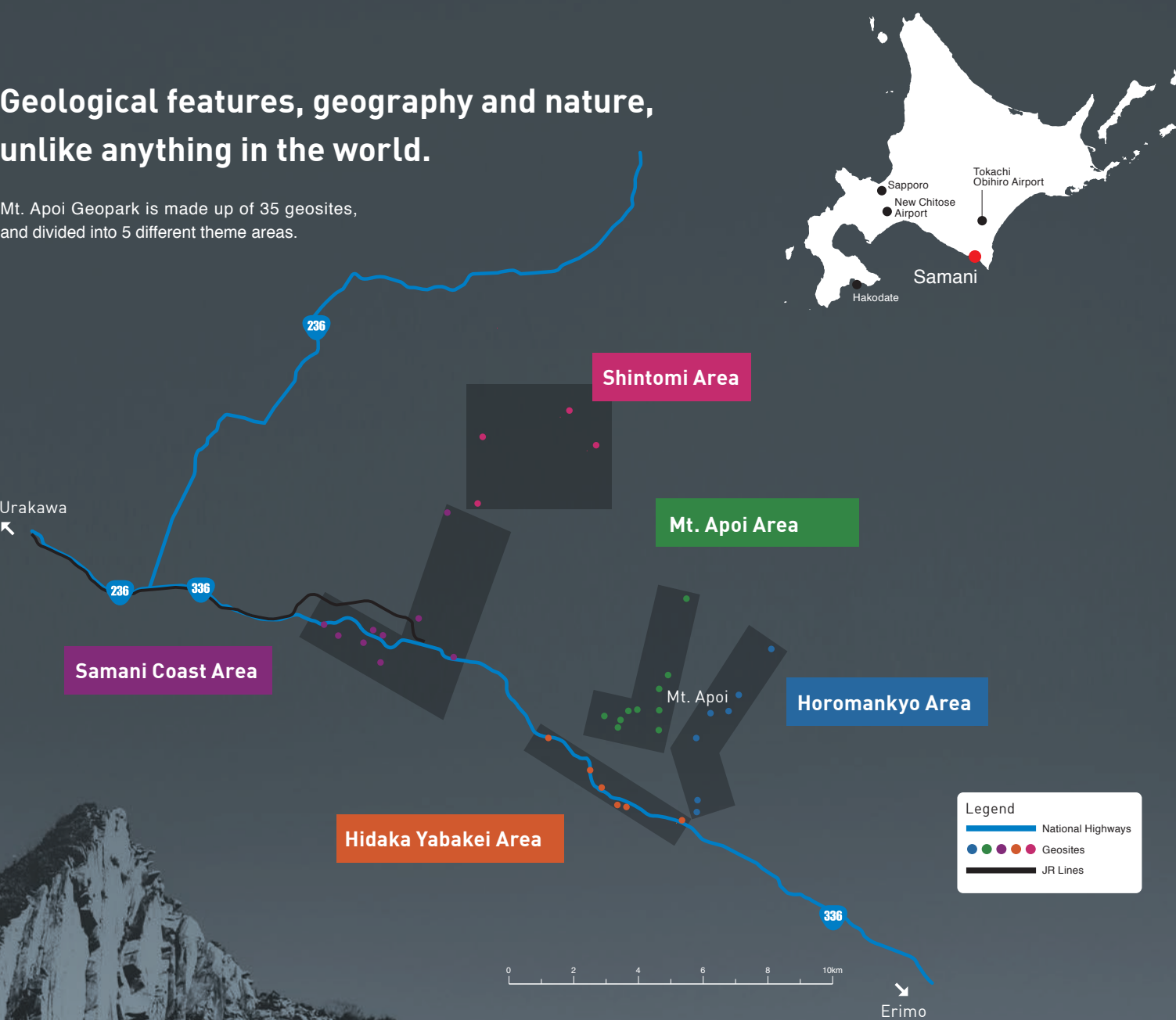
The Hidaka Mountain Range in the Background, the Pacific Ocean in the Foreground

Samani is located on the southeast side of the Hidaka Mountain Range, the backbone of Hokkaido. Over 90% of the total area is covered in forests, and rolling hills encroach upon the shoreline. The sunset which slowly sinks into the Pacific Ocean takes one's breath away. The summers are cool and winters are mild, considering the cold nature of Hokkaido. The amount of snowfall is also relatively minimal. It is in

such rich nature, that fishing has flourished from ancient times, and seafood such as sea urchin, true whelks, kombu and salmon are some of the fine seafood available, besides the delicious strawberries that have recently been grown in the cool climate here in Samani.

Geological features, geography and nature, unlike anything in the world.

Mt. Apoi Geopark is made up of 35 geosites, and divided into 5 different theme areas.



Three keywords to help you enjoy Mt. Apoi Geopark

1 Hints on how to discover the "inside" of the earth. Kanran Rock

One of the biggest features of Mt. Apoi Geopark, is the rare and magnificent rock formation, "Kanran Rock," which is formed from the mantle deep within the earth and due to the earth's movement. This is a rare and amazing site worldwide, which allows visitors to see the inner cores of the earth, while being on the surface of the earth.

2 Why on a mountain so low? Alpine Vegetation

The combined elements of the Kanran Rock formation and its unusual geological features, and the weather, allow for alpine vegetation to grow on Mt. Apoidake, even though it is only 810 meters in elevation. Here you can even find rare and native kinds of alpine plants. The Mt. Apoi Alpine Vegetation Colony is a designated Special Natural Monument of the nation.

3 A Story is Born from the Unique Geography The History of the People

There are many Ainu legends surrounding the coastline of Samani, where various unusual rock formations of many sizes can be seen in the ocean. The cape which has been used as a natural port since the Edo period, played an important role for the Kitamae merchant ships.

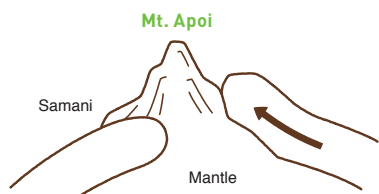
Take a walk through the Mt. Apoi Geopark.

Journey to discover the mystique of nature, and the dynamism of the earth.

Mt. Apoi
[Mt. Apoi Area]

Unique alpine vegetation provided by the Kanran Rock formation.
A symbol of Mt. Apoi Geopark.

"Apoi is shortened from the Ainu word Apeoinupuri, Apé (fire) Oi (where there are many), Nupuri(mountain), where as ancient Ainu legend goes, fires were once made in the alters on top of the mountains to pray to the gods for an abundant catch of deer.
Just 4 km from the coast, Mt. Apoi is an easy climb in casual wear. It takes approximately 2 and a half hours to climb to the summit, 5-6 hours round-trip. The best time to climb is between late April and late October when there is no snow on the ground. If you stand on one of the peaks known as the "horse's back", you can see a grand panorama of both the Pacific Ocean and the Hidaka Mountain Range. The climate of the area is cool, due to its location near the sea, there is little snow during the winter, so the roads are usually dry, and the terrain made by the Kanran rock formations makes it difficult for vegetation to grow. Such factors are responsible for the rare environment which allows alpine vegetation to grow on Mt. Apoi, even though it is only 810 meters in elevation. "



What is Kanran Rock formation?

Deep within the earth is the mantle, and it is in this mantle that rocks known as "kanran rocks" are formed. This is one of the few places on the surface of earth, where you can see a natural phenomom that belongs deep underground.



Alpine Vegetation of Mt. Apoi

Alpine vegetation unique to Mt. Apoi near 20 different kinds. The Mt. Apoi Alpine Vegetation Colony is a registered Special Natural Monument of Japan.

1 Callianthemum miyabeianum (family of Ranunculaceae)

2 Cat's ear

3 Primula modesta

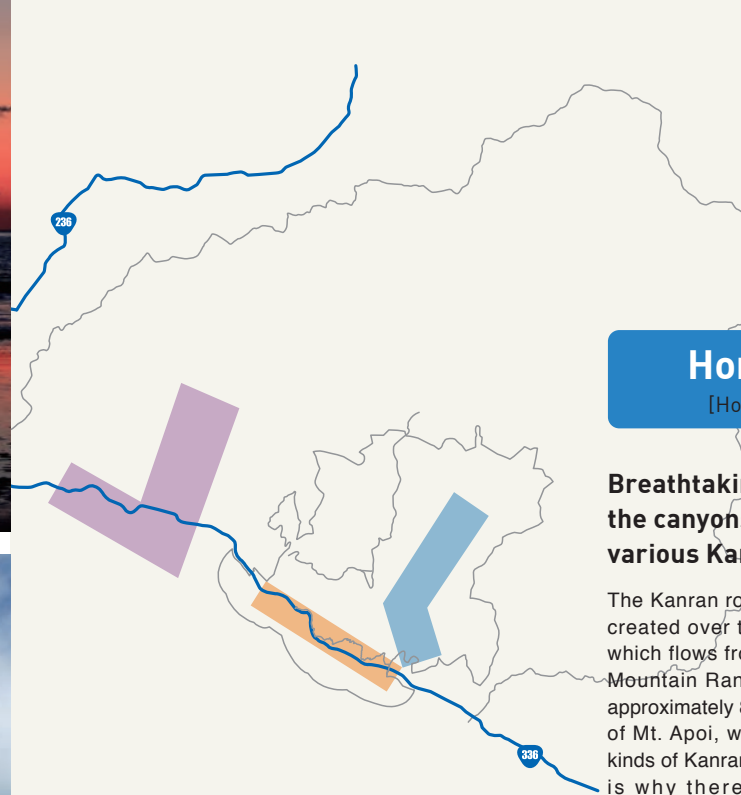
4 Erigeron thunbergii subsp. glabratus

5 Viola sacchalinensis

6 Silene repens var. apoiensis

7 Hyericum samaniense





Take a **walk** through the Geopark.

Here are some of the highlights.

Horomankyo

[Horomankyo Area]

1

Breathtaking view of the canyons created by various Kanran rock formations.

The Kanran rock formation canyons were created over time by the Horoman River which flows from its source in the Hidaka Mountain Range. The canyons continue approximately 8 km toward the eastern side of Mt. Apoi, where you can view various kinds of Kanran rock formations, and which is why there are many geosites for researchers. Midway up the mountain, there is a mixed forest comprised of coniferous and deciduous trees, and in this forest is the Japanese White Pine, which is a registered Natural Monument of the Nation. The forest changes beautiful colors in late October.

Oyakoiva

[Samani Coast Area]

2

Another symbol of Samani that competes with Mt. Apoi.

Three rock formations that appear as a family stand together. This point, which is also a famous spot for viewing sunsets, is said to bring happiness to families if you stand at this point and pray. Only for a short time during winter, you can see the sunset right between the three rocks. This family rock formation is only an example of all the interesting rock formations that can be seen along the Samani Coast. There are many Ainu legends linked to these unique rock formations.

Cape Enrumu

[Samani Coast Area]

3

Historically important points that relate to present-day Samani.

Tied islands are created over time, as the waves carrying sands begins to link the island to the land. From long ago, the area was considered the perfect natural port for ships to make berth, and it was used from the Edo period to accommodate the Kitamae merchant ships, which led to the development of present-day Samani. On the back side of the cape, there are spectacular platy joints that were created by lava as it cooled, and from the observatory you can enjoy a sweeping view of the Mt. Apoi Geopark.

Mt. Kannon

[Samani Coast Area]

4

The perfect viewpoint for the rock formations in the ocean.

There is a little mountain shaped like a bell that is no more than 100 meters in elevation, overlooking the port of Samani, which was once used as a chasi(fort) for the Ainu. Many legends connected to battles remain in the area. Visitors can access the summit observatory by car, where you can view the many interesting and unusual rock formations such as Oyakoiva(family rock), and Cape Enrumu. The entire mountain is covered in deciduous trees, and the floor of the forest is covered with trout lilies, Trillium camschatcense and other dainty little flowers.

Fuyushima Tunnel Rock

[Hidaka Yabakei Area]

5

A natural tunnel created by the force of waves.

The foothills of Mt. Apoi drop into the Pacific Ocean, creating a coast of steep cliffs that continue 7 kilometers down the coast. This area is called the Hidaka Yabakei area, is the border where once upon a time, the Eurasia plate and North American plates collided. This large sea cave that inside the Fuyushima Port, was made by waves eroding away the large rock. The name Fuyushima is derived from the Ainu word for the sea cave, puyu(hole), shuma(rock).

If you are visiting Samani for the first time, you must stop by here first.

Mt. Apoi Geopark Visitor Center



The facility offers comprehensive information such as the geological and geographical aspects, nature, history, culture, and industry pertaining to the Mt. Apoi Geopark. Conditions for climbing Mt. Apoi, such as what alpine vegetation is in season, and sightings of the brown bears are provided in real time.

Hirau 479-7, Samani
TEL 0146-36-3601
Open: 9:00 - 17:00
Open Season: Apr - Nov
(open upon request between Dec - Mar)
No closed days during open season.

Here are some tips how to enhance your experience at the Geopark.

Mt. Apoi Geopark Service Guide



Expert guides who know all there is to know about Mt. Apoi Geopark will help to satiate your curiosity and provide you with an awesome tour. You can also request a guide to ride with you and show you the sights, so please feel free to make your requests known.

Price: ¥5,000 and up per guide.
(Maximum of 15 people per group,
and under 4 hours)
Inquiries/Reservations
Mt. Apoi Geopark Promotional Council Office
TEL 0146-36-2120

The most beautiful inn will soothe the stresses of travel.

Apoi Sanso



Lodging facility located near the Mt. Apoi trailhead, with a commanding view of Mt. Apoi and the Pacific Ocean. The large public bath is complete with outdoor bath, and offers day-trip bathing.

Hirau 479-7, Samani
TEL 0146-36-5211
19 Rooms Accommodates up to 59 people
<http://apoi-sanso.co.jp/>

Recommended routes and courses.

Choose from easy 4-hour courses to serious climbing courses that take approximately 8 hours. Check our website for the best trekking and walking courses.

Mt. Apoi Geopark Official Website <http://www.apoi-geopark.jp/>

Free App [Geopark Burari]

Use the GPS on your smartphone and tablet to access maps and your location, as well as introductions to the geopark, and various tourist information, complete with photos. This App is an official free App of the Japan Geopark Network.



iPhone users see here



Android users see here

Local food

Rich blessings of the sea and mountains, to your heart's content.

The waters off of Samani where the Oyashio(Kurile current) and the Kuroshio current collide, make for the perfect fishing grounds. The cool climate here is also fit for growing strawberries.



Sea Urchin

Spring is the season for sea urchin in Hidaka. Ezo bafun sea urchin that have fed on quality Hidaka kombu are sweet and very rich in taste.



True Whelks

Samani Whelks are the largest of its kind in Hokkaido. Served Sashimi style, they are crunchy in texture like abalone, and juicy with every bite.



Kombu

Hidaka kombu, also known as Mitsuishi kombu, is carefully dried in the sun, and on a really sunny day during the summer when fishing is at its peak, you will see kombu lain across the drying yards.



Salmon

Ginsei salmon, a fatty salmon, is a common variety known to the Samani area. The meat is used to make Aramaki rolls, and Yamazuke, which is done by heavily salting the salmon to preserve it. The salmon eggs are used to make Ikura and Sujiko(cured eggs).



Strawberries

Samani strawberries are grown with clean water and clear air. Sparkling wine made from generous amounts of fresh strawberries, has a crisp and light taste.



'Apoi rice'

Clean water from Mt. Apoi is used to make Apoi rice, which is made with a special cultivation method with reduced amounts of pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

Camping

Enjoy the richness of nature on the ocean and in the mountains!

There are three campgrounds in town, so you can enjoy camping either on the beach or in the mountains.



Oyakoikiwa Fureai-Beach Campgrounds

Campgrounds with a grand view of the Oyakoikiwa rock formation in the sea. Complete with shower, changing room, and flushable toilets.

Period Late Jun - late Sep (swimming between early Jul - mid Aug)
Admission One night Adults ¥600, elementary - Jr. High ¥400, screen tents and tarps, ¥300 per night.
Reservations Free Site
Oyakoikiwa Fureai Beach Center House (during the season)
Inquiries TEL 0146-36-5555
Samani Town Hall Chamber of Commerce Tourism Department (off season)
TEL 0146-36-2119



Surfing Spot, Hidaka Yabakei Area

The Hidaka Yabakei area, where the cliffs at the foot of Mt. Apoi drop straight into the ocean, is in fact a well known surfing spot, and on the weekends during summer, surfers gather from all over to ride the waves.



Samani Dam Campgrounds

Known for the beautiful Ezo Cherries that bloom in May. Kitchen area and restrooms available.

Season Mid Apr - mid Oct
Admission Free
Inquiries Samani Town Hall Chamber of Commerce Tourism Department TEL 0146-36-2119



Mt. Apoi Foothills Family Park Campgrounds

Water faucet, kitchen area, flush toilets. Small bungalows also available.

Season Mid Apr - mid Sep
Admission One night Adults ¥600, elementary - Jr. High ¥400, screen tents and tarps ¥300 per night, bungalows, ¥2000 per one
Inquiries Mt. Apoi Fire Festival

Event Info

Samani Festivals you enjoy with all five senses!

*Please contact staff for details and dates on events.



Sea Urchin Festival

Mid to late May

Delicious and fresh Ezo bafun sea urchin and other seafood from Samani are sold.



Mt. Apoi Fire Festival

First Saturday and Sunday in August

The fire festival is based on the Ainu traditions, and became the name for Mt. Apoi. There are many fire-related events that take place in Samani, such as the Flame Ceremony on the foothills of Mt. Apoi, the Fire Letters on Cape Enrumu, and the Apoi Drums and Nebuta Parade.



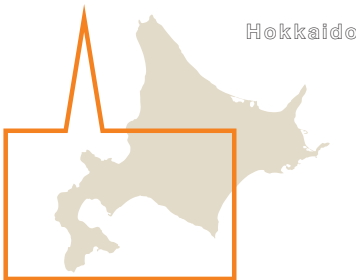
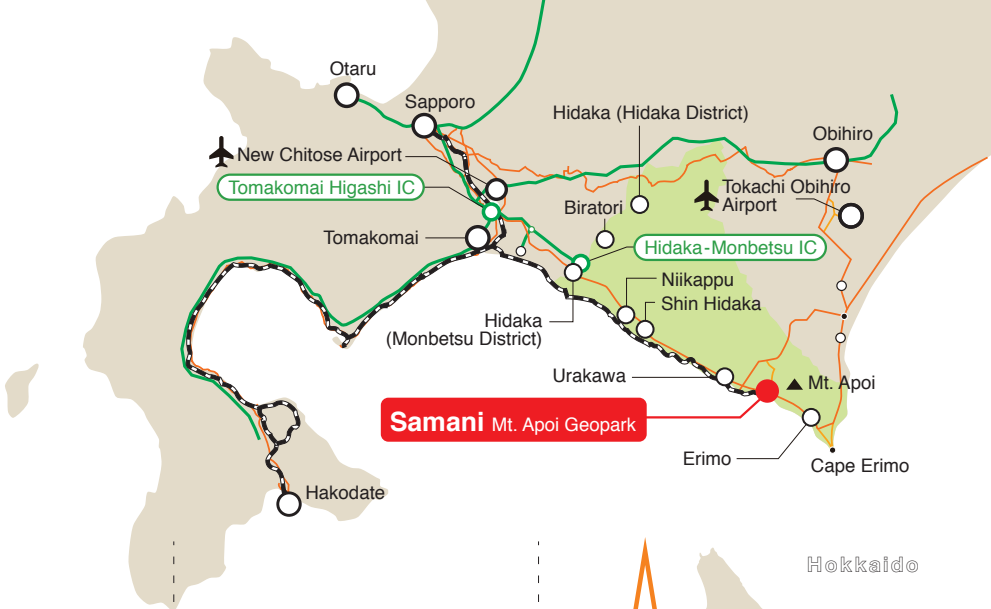
Local Produce Fair

Late October

Purchase high quality local produce like salmon Yamazuke, and other seafood, not to mention Apoi Rice made with minimal pesticides. The facility also offers a gourmet corner serving ideal gourmet dishes.

Enjoy every aspect of the Hidaka area.

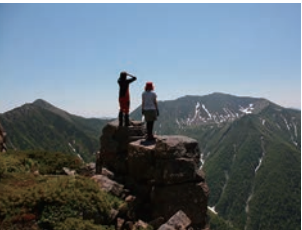
There are many different attractions in each town in the Hidaka, Hokkaido area, where Samani is located. Which route will you take?



HIDAKA

HIDAKA district

Here you can enjoy the only mountain glacial landform in Hokkaido, view basic alpine plants as you climb, and activities such as rafting down Saru River, the clearest river in Japan.



Official Website

<http://www.town.hidaka.hokkaido.jp/>

HIDAKA

MOMBETSU district

The Monbetsu District is well known for the Shishamo smelt that live here. Between April and November the Hokkaido Horse Races are held at the Monbetsu Race Track, where visitors can watch the powerful and exciting horse race up close, and the famous Bucket Genghis Khan Lamb BBQ.



Official Website

<http://www.town.hidaka.hokkaido.jp/>

BIRATORI

Biratori boasts the largest production of tomatoes in Hokkaido, as well as its quality black-haired Wagyu beef. It is also home to the largest Lily-of-the-valley colony in Japan, which is open to the public between mid May to mid June. At the 'Nibutani Ainu Cultural Museum', you can learn and experience the Ainu culture of the area.



Official Website

<http://www.town.biratori.hokkaido.jp/>

NIIKAPPU

The Record Hall, a symbol of the city, carries approximately one million records donated from all over the nation. The breathtaking view of the sun sinking into the Pacific Ocean can be seen from the 'Niikappu Hot Springs Record Bath', on top of a little hill.



Official Website

<http://www.niikappu.jp/>

SHINHIDAKA

Approximately 20% of thoroughbreds born and raised in Japan are from ShinHidaka. Nijukkenzaka Cherry Colonnade, where over 3,000 cherry trees line both sides of the 7 kilometer straight road, is selected as "the 100 Most Famous Cherry Blossom Sites" in Japan.



Official Website

<http://www.shinhidaka-hokkaido.jp/>

URAKAWA

There are about 200 horse ranches in Urakawa, where over 3,000 horses can be seen running around. The largest horseback riding resort in Japan, "Yushun Village AERU" offers a myriad of programs such as horse trekking on the vast premises, and other horseback riding activities.

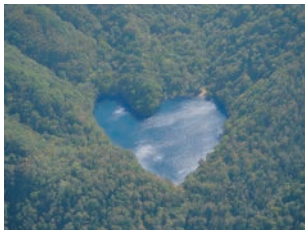


Official Website

<http://www.town.urakawa.hokkaido.jp/>

ERIMO

The famous Cape Erimo is located here in Erimo. It is also known as the "windy city," where strong winds blow on a regular basis. It is also home to many beautiful scenic sights, such as Lake Toyoni, which is shaped like a heart, and used for a Hokkaido sweets commercial.



Official Website

<http://www.town.erimo.lg.jp/>

Access to Samani

By car

From

Sapporo.....(via the expressway) 180km
New Chitose Airport.....155km
Tokachi - Obihiro Airport.....115km
Hakodate.....(via the expressway) 395km

By bus

From

Sapporo
JR Hokkaido Bus
[Express Erimo].....3 hrs and 20 min
Donan Bus
[Express Pegasus].....4 hrs and 20 min
(transfer in Urakawa)
New Chitose Airport
Donan Bus
[Ltd. Exp. Urakawa].....4 hrs and 20 min
(transfer in Urakawa)

By train

JR Hidaka Main Line Mukawa - Samani is presently closed due to damage from high tides. Please use the bus.
Current as of March, 2016.