

Lake Towada & Oirase Map & Area Guide



A History of Lake Towada

Lake Towada is a volcanogenic lake formed after a series of volcanic eruptions.

- Approx. 220,000 years ago**
Approx. 600,000 to 220,000 years ago
Mt. Towada was dormant during this period. Volcanic activity began around 220,000 years ago and is divided into the following three periods.
- Pre-Caldera Period**
Approx. 200,000 to 61,000 years ago
Sustained volcanic activity leads to the formation of multiple stratovolcanoes.
- Caldera Formation Period**
Approx. 61,000 to 15,000 years ago
The center of the volcanic zone begins to collapse as eruptions grow larger. A caldera lake forms around 15,000 years ago, giving shape to the Lake Towada we know today. During that same time, a wall near its northeastern shores breaks near Nenokuchi, unleashing a devastating flood and forming the Oirase Gorge.
- Late Caldera Period**
Approximately 15,000 years ago to the present day
Small-scale stratovolcano activity continues within the caldera, creating Mt. Goshiki-iwa, a volcano near the southern end of the caldera. Around 7,500 years ago, a lava dome forms on Mt. Goshiki-iwa following an eruption on its northeastern side. This would later become the Ogura Peninsula. By about 1,100 years ago, several smaller eruptions on Mt. Goshiki-iwa form a second crater, now known as the Nakanoumi crater, which connects with the rest of the lake. It is thought that during this time the water from the surrounding lake rushed in to form the present-day Lake Nakanoumi (Middle Lake).



Yakeyama & Tsuta Area (Map #5)



Yakeyama & Tsuta Area

The surface of the Tsuta-numa Pond, as a perfect mirror image of the surrounding scenery, is truly spectacular. In autumn, the mountainside is set ablaze with reds and browns. With several hot springs and a ski resort, this area is the perfect jumping-off point for taking in all that Lake Towada has to offer.

Autumn Leaves at Tsuta-numa Pond

West Shore Area

The historic architecture and the hatchery of Lake Towada *himemasu* (kokanee salmon) on Lake Towada's western shores give you a feel for modern history and local tradition. Find a humble chapel along the walking path and appreciate the magnificent cedar construction of Towada Hotel.



Himemasu (Kokanee Salmon) Fishway



Oirase Area

Ashura-no-nagare Current

Enjoy a uniquely lush, mossy landscape that thrives in the steady, gentle streams from Lake Towada. Enjoy the numerous waterfalls and different shapes that the river takes as it meanders through the gorge.

Food & Drink at Lake Towada

On the shores of Lake Towada, there are restaurants and *minshuku*-style bed and breakfasts where you can sample Lake Towada *himemasu* (kokanee salmon) and other wild vegetable dishes—not to mention local rice and vegetables. Taste the finest local dishes from both Aomori and Akita, including *senbei-jiru* (rice cracker stew) and *kiritanpo* (pounded rice). You may even be able to try seasonal delights such as dried mochi, boiled *mame-shitogi* bean cakes, or *bakke-miso* (butterbur sprouts in a miso sauce) as well. All of these simple yet delicious recipes await you at Lake Towada.

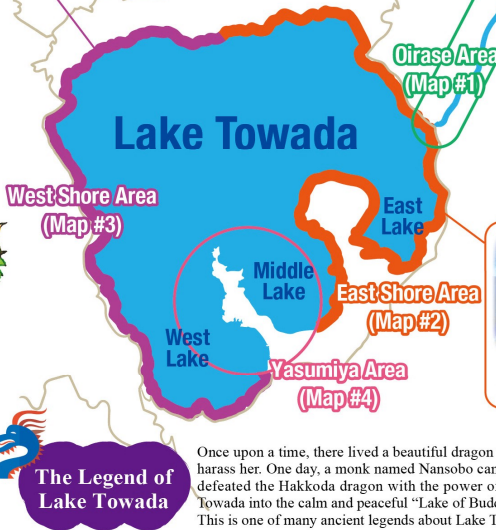


Yasumiya Area

This area is home to the famous Statue of Maidens and Towada-jinja Shrine. The center of sightseeing at Lake Towada, Yasumiya has plenty of restaurants, gift shops, lodgings, boats, and canoes as well as a visitor center and tourist information center.



Statue of Maidens



The Legend of Lake Towada

Once upon a time, there lived a beautiful dragon woman in Lake Towada, and a nearby dragon from Hakkoda would often come to harass her. One day, a monk named Nansobo came to the lake amid his ascetic training after hearing the god of Kumano. Nansobo defeated the Hakkoda dragon with the power of the Lotus Sutra, married the dragon woman of Lake Towada, and turned Lake Towada into the calm and peaceful "Lake of Buddha" we know today, making him the guardian of the lake. This is one of many ancient legends about Lake Towada.

Local Guide

NPO Towada Oirase Kunizukuri Daigaku

This NPO holds forums and trains professionals who can contribute to the development and promotion of the Towada area through activities that include the training of certified Towada-Oirase guides.

■ Guided Nature Tours of Oirase Gorge

From Ishigedo Rest Area, it is a 90-minute walk to Kumoi-no-taki Falls and a 3-and-a-half hour walk to Nenokuchi at Lake Towada.

■ Guided Nature Walks of Tsuta

Trails are open to everyone, but walking with a guide can be an exciting way to learn more about the forests and marshes in the area.

- Learn more at www.npo-oirase.com
- NPO Towada Oirase Kunizukuri Daigaku
- ☎ 0176-72-2780

ESARIO Co., Ltd.

Truly appreciate the great outdoors on guided nature walks that take you into the heart of Oirase's natural environment.

■ Moss Walk (Mid-April to Early November)

Take a closer look at moss—Oirase's best-kept secret.

■ Oirase Nature Walk

Nature guides lead these small group tours where you can learn about the many different faces of Oirase Gorge, including its plants, history, and geology.

- Learn more at <https://foreston.jp>
- NPO Oiken
- ☎ 0176-23-5866
- ✉ tour@foreston.jp

Lake Towada Nature Guide Club

The Lake Towada Nature Guide Club holds early-morning walks in Yasumiya where local guides lead you through the pristine natural environment and little-known historic sites of Lake Towada. The course is one hour round trip from the Yasumiya lakeside. Enjoy a morning stroll along the lake with local guides, or request a guided tour for other areas around Lake Towada and Oirase Gorge.

● Lake Towada Nature Guide Club Office (Yoshizaki)

☎ 090-5181-7658 *Reservations not required for early morning Yasumiya walks. Come directly to the Lake Towada Tourist Center "Pratt" at 6:00 a.m. (Walks held 4/28 - 11/3)



Fishing Information

At Lake Towada and the Oirase Gorge, you can also enjoy fishing by purchasing a fishing license or paying a recreational fishing fee.

Fish found in Lake Towada: *himemasu* (kokanee salmon), *koi* carp, crucian carp, cherry salmon, and shrimp.

Fish found in the Oirase Gorge: sweetfish, *koi* carp, Japanese dace, *yamame* trout, whitespotted char, rainbow trout, and eel.

For more information, please contact the following organizations.

● Fishing at Lake Towada

Lake Towada Fisheries & Hatcheries Cooperative

☎ 0176-75-2612

(Closed Saturdays, Sundays, and National Holidays)

● Fishing in the Oirase Gorge

Oirase River Fisheries Cooperative

☎ 0176-72-3933

(Closed Saturdays, Sundays, and National Holidays)

