

Chūbu 中部

HIGHLIGHTS

- Scaling the steel chains and ladders that help to get you up **Tsurugi-dake** (p125), the most challenging of the 100 Famous Mountains
- Sharing a breath-taking sunrise with other hikers atop **Kita-dake** (p109) in the South Alps, Japan's second highest peak
- Relaxing in **Kamikōchi** (p135) after descending from Oku-hotaka-dake (3190m), third highest peak in Japan
- Climbing remote and holy **Haku-san** (p147), highest mountain in Japan west of the Alps
- Topping sacred **Tate-yama** (p125) and taking in the 360-degree panorama of the North Alps
- Secret Spot: Soaking in **Kawara-no-yu rotenburo** 10 minutes up the track from **Tsubame Onsen** (p145) after coming down off Myōkō-san



CHŪBU

Central Honshū, or Chūbu as it is known in Japanese, comprises the band of land extending from Kyoto in the west to Tokyo in the east and features the north, central and south regions of the Japan Alps. The highlights of hiking in Japan are in this region: all 21 of Japan's 3000m plus peaks – the three great spiritual mountains of Fuji-san, Tate-yama and Haku-san, half of Japan's 100 Famous Mountains, and a stunning array of hiking tracks, mountain huts, camping areas and hot springs. Thus Chūbu, and the North Alps in particular, is the most popular hiking region in Japan.

Being on the Pacific 'Rim of Fire', Japan is one of the most tectonically active areas of the world and Chūbu is one of the most active areas of Japan. Most of Japan's mountain ranges run parallel to the basic northeast to southwest direction of the island chain, but running through the middle of Chūbu – almost at right-angles to the standard ranges – is the Fossa-Magna Tectonic Line. This clash in direction of the fault lines has produced the highest mountains in Japan including the North, Central and South Alps, and great volcanoes such as Norikura, Ontake, Yatsu-ga-take and Fuji.

Because of snow at altitude, most of the tracks in this chapter can only be hiked from early July to mid-October. Six- to seven-day length-of-the-Alps routes are possible and a fair number of long hikes are included. In most cases these can be shortened to one- or two-day trips for those with less time.

CHŪBU – MAPS

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