

World Class Ski Resorts in The land of the Rising Sun

Most people know that Japan hosted the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, but few are aware that Japan boasts in excess of 600 ski resorts. Thankfully all has been revealed, and Australians in particular are now beginning to take advantage of Japan's spectacular alpine regions

January 26, 2007 (FPRC) -- Location, location, location: the northern island of Hokkaido is situated east of Siberia, and it's for this reason that Niseko, Hokkaido's premier ski and snow board destination gets an unusually high snowfall. From late November through to May Niseko is deluged with the driest powder snow on the planet – (jap: yuki) It's not unusual to be skiing or boarding in waist deep powder in the peak of the season – an unbelievable experience. The Siberian winds dump around 15 meters annually and its possible to ski right through winter and on into spring - the lifts close early May.

Niseko actually consists of three interlinked first class ski fields – An'nupuri, Higashiyama and Grand Hirafu (which includes Hanazono). These 3 adjoining resorts make up Niseko and offer spectacular skiing and boarding at all levels. Lifts are open from 8.30am and you can ski all day and on into the night under lights until 8.45pm- Niseko has Japan's largest night skiing facilities.

The Resort' facilities are world class: - the extensive lift system is fast, comfortable and uncrowded and includes over 30 covered chair lifts, gondolas and twins. There are a number of large restaurants on the mountain where you can relax with a beer or hot drink and good quality local cuisine.

What makes this idealic location especially appealing to Australians is the fact that english is widely spoken - this is not true of many of the resorts in Japan who cater primarily to the locals. Much of the development, as well as the infrastructure, in Niseko, has been pioneered by ex-pat Australians, who some 15 years ago "discovered" this amazing location.

There are plenty of other activities in Niseko that adds to your Japanese experience. Hot Springs (Japanese Onsens), Snowmobiling, Snow Shoeing, Horse Riding and a whole lot more. There are about 50 restaurants in Niseko and in nearby Kutchan that offers a huge range of cuisine including Korean, Italian, Nepalese, Indonesian and of course Japanese.

Getting there is simple. You can fly to Sapporo from all Australian capital cities and there is also a direct 7hr flight from Cairns. From Perth you can fly Cathay Pacific via Hong Kong or QANTAS via Tokyo or Cairns- and you get there without any of the effects of jet lag. Perth's daylight saving time is in the same time zone as Japan.

If you haven't been to Japan, why not try Niseko, Australia's only "satellite town" in Japan. It's perfect for Australia's extreme sportspeople, casual skiers, and families looking for something special.

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