

EXPLORE
a rural town
Southern Hokkaido

“A Journey into the Life & Culture”

Kuromatsunai





A Journey into the Life & Culture!

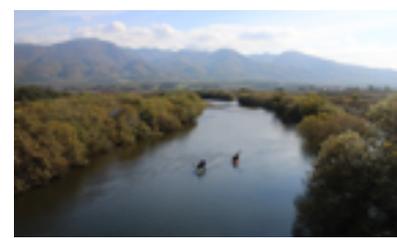
This town isn't known for the typical sightseeing spots, historical locations, famous scenery, mountain climbing or ski resorts. However, this area offers a very special perspective with insight to the way of local livelihood, quite a unique style of travel for you to explore! Experience what it feels like to live in a small rural town in Hokkaido. This is our concept and recommended style of travel we call, "A Journey into the Life & Culture!"

A Warm Welcome!



Kuromatsunai Town joined the most beautiful villages in Japan since 2010. Therefore, it is an important point for traffic from ancient times. Since then, the area becomes the post-town where often

been referred for its warm sense of hospitality. At the time, it was a two-day endeavor for the fisherman to cut across Hokkaido from the Pacific Ocean to the Sea of Japan to fish for herring. You can imagine how the fisherman felt walking on the mountain road after being at sea and finally arrive at a lodge in Kuromatsunai where they could rest well, share stories, bond and rejuvenate for the next day. During the start of the Heisei Period (1989~), the capital and the local countryside people worked together to create a town in the image of "caring for the environment," and naturally declared the local Japanese Beech Trees as their symbol. Since then, travelers on the mountain road have gradually changed from fisherman to people who simply want to enjoy the beautiful countryside atmosphere! In 2011, Mr. and Mrs. Tomita, a potato farming family decided they wanted to create an opportunity for city people to come and experience country life in Kuromatsunai. They started an agricultural lodging house called, "Farm Inn Tomita." They provide homemade breakfast and dinner made with vegetables from their local farm, wild edible plants and fresh water fish from the local river. After spending time with the lively locals you'll feel like this is home away from home! When asked, Mr. Tomita said, "More than just a typical sightseeing spot, we've created an environment where travelers can truly experience and appreciate rural life while being fully embraced by the surrounding nature. We look forward to sharing this special experience with new faces!"



The Natural Environment of Kuromatsunai

Kuromatsunai Town is a peaceful place home to Japanese Beech trees, and an area of land perfectly situated for an easy crossing through the southern part of Hokkaido with access to both the Pacific Ocean and Sea of Japan, a distance stretching only 20 kilometers wide. The length of Kuromatsunai is about 43 kilometers existing as an entirely natural landscape, without a single dam interfering with any of its rivers. The well-known Shubuto River gracefully flows through the land into the bay of the Sea of Japan. This river basin is known for its biodiversity and abundance of high quality fish including Landlocked Salmon and Ayu (sweetfish).



Overcoming a Deforestation Emergency Twice

Utasai Beech Forest was designated as a nature memorial and since then has undergone two deforestation emergencies. The forest was cleared for lumber for the first time in 1944 during World War Two to provide materials for the military. The second time was in 1954, to make up for the budget deficit, providing lumber for rebuilding during post war times. However, the townspeople together with ecologists filled lawsuits and were able to overcome each deforestation project. The local people are proud of the history and cultural importance of Utasai Beech Forest and are dedicated to preserve it for years to come.



Wildlife of Kuromatsunai

One of the symbols of Kuromatsunai is the giant woodpecker, actually the largest woodpecker species in Japan, which inhabits the Japanese beech tree forests. The other symbol is the Ayu (sweetfish) known for only inhabiting the clearest fresh water streams. The Shubuto River in Kuromatsunai, which flows from the Pacific Ocean side across to the Sea of Japan provides the perfect living conditions for these beautiful fish. In 2016, the Ayu fish inhabiting the Shubuto River won a kind of Grand Prix recognition for being the biggest and healthiest fish in the competition.



Agriculture in Kuromatsunai!

Kuromatsunai is said to be a town excelling in welfare and dairy farming. When it comes to agricultural produce, Kuromatsunai is also a producer and manufacturer of potato seeds, wheat, buckwheat and adzuki beans! The hilly areas in the town of Kuromatsunai are said to resemble the "Cotswold" in Great Britain, a beautiful hilly landscape with green pastures and agricultural fields. Travelers can enjoy freshly baked bread made with locally grown wheat, delicious dairy products such as cheese and ice cream made from creamy Hokkaido milk, and spectacular carefully crafted Japanese sweets made from adzuki beans. Enjoy!

A photograph of a forest path in spring. The path is covered with a dense carpet of purple dogtooth violets. The trees are tall and thin, with light-colored bark. The ground is a mix of dirt and fallen leaves. In the distance, a person is walking on the path. The overall scene is bright and colorful, indicating the arrival of spring.

Spring
春

Dogtooth Violet

Indicate Spring Has Come to Kuromatsunai!



Summer
夏

**Coast in the Direction of the Breeze
Through a Serene Rural Town!**

Autumn

秋

Be Wrapped with Diversed Nature



A photograph of a winter forest. In the foreground, there are evergreen trees with snow on their branches. The background is filled with a dense stand of bare, light-colored deciduous trees. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow. The overall scene is bright and serene.

winter

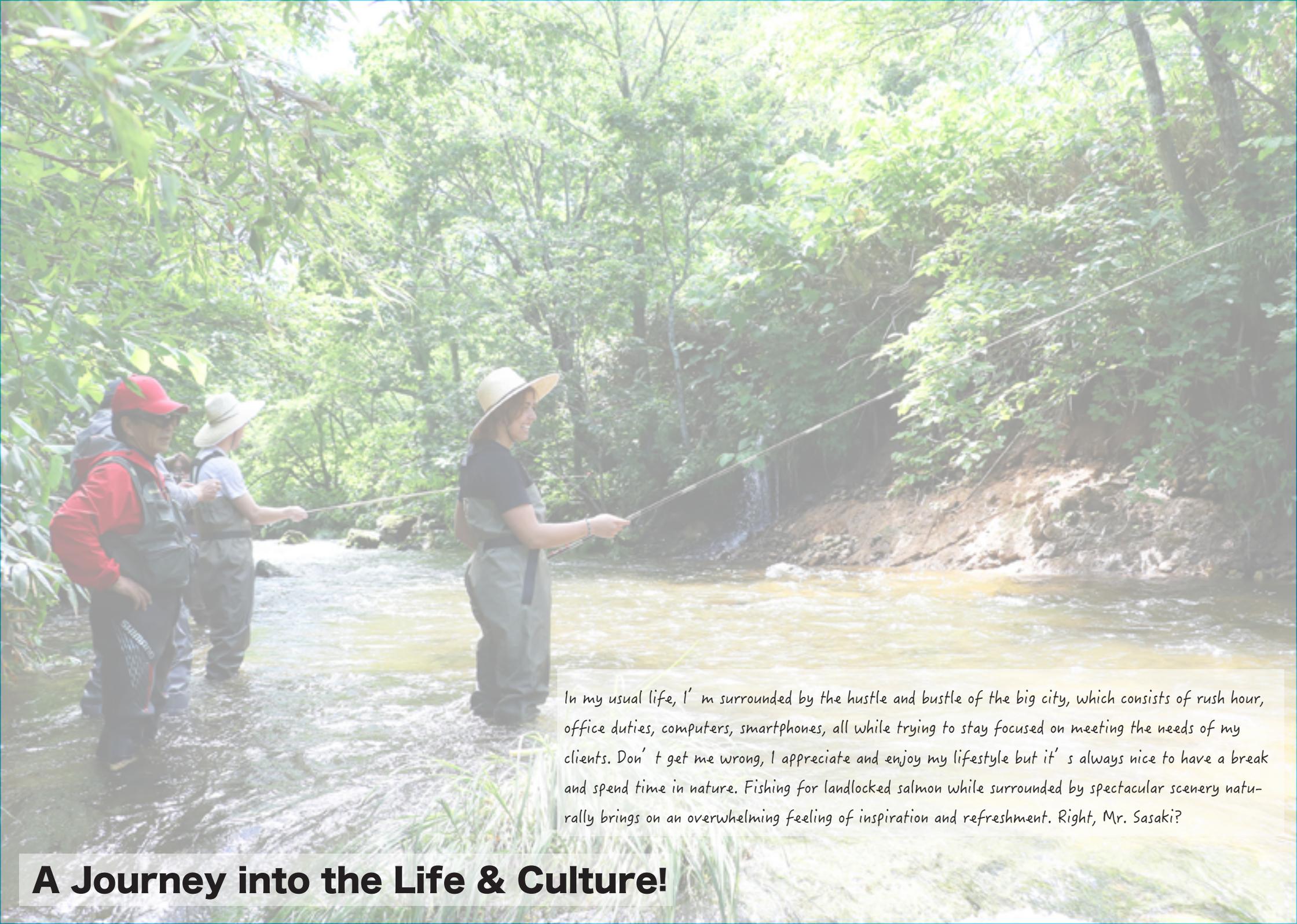


**Experience the Warm Local Lifestyle
in Snow Country!**

The breeze around here is a bit different from back home in California. It's July, the skies are blue and the air has a crisp cool feel to it. Also, the smell of grass is refreshing when coasting through the vivid green pastures. I recommend leaving your cell phone and GoPro in your bag so you can experience this special time to the fullest. The pizza I had yesterday was amazing! Today I stopped at Wagatsuma Bistro for a special set lunch. I guess you could say I rewarded myself for riding around for half a day!

A Journey into the Life & Culture!





In my usual life, I'm surrounded by the hustle and bustle of the big city, which consists of rush hour, office duties, computers, smartphones, all while trying to stay focused on meeting the needs of my clients. Don't get me wrong, I appreciate and enjoy my lifestyle but it's always nice to have a break and spend time in nature. Fishing for landlocked salmon while surrounded by spectacular scenery naturally brings on an overwhelming feeling of inspiration and refreshment. Right, Mr. Sasaki?

A Journey into the Life & Culture!



When I lived in Yokohama I used to have a hard time talking with people. I thought that if went to China or America where I could speak in a different language, I would overcome my shyness. However, that wasn't the case and I soon realized nothing had changed. It wasn't until I experienced the beech tree forests here in Kuro-matsunai, when I realized I had a lot I wanted to share and communicate! I want to share this precious atmosphere with people from big cities! I want to share it with people from abroad! Lastly, I want to give children the opportunity to come in contact with and learn about the beech tree forests.

A Journey into the Life & Culture!



I didn't know that making handmade tofu had such a strong aroma. Experiencing the process, without any additives used, has opened my eyes to how healthy tofu actually is! I also realized that the affection of the person making it is a key ingredient! Even though we first met, I felt as though the lady welcomed me as one of her grandchildren. Plan to eat after lunch as well, as you'll be visiting a local potato farming family's house for a traditional mochi pounding activity! I have a new appreciation for this rural community. What a nice lifestyle being able to make great tasting tofu with your very own soy beans that you grew!

A Journey into the Life & Culture!



When speaking of agriculture in Hokkaido, one can't forget to mention the vast agricultural farmlands spreading across the Tokachi region. I've always thought about starting my own dairy farming business on a big farm but I have to say I love this community. I truly appreciate and enjoy the family running the farm and couldn't ask for anything more. The green seasons are quite busy and pretty full-on morning, afternoon and night. However, the white season offers a fair amount of free time and opportunity to explore snow country life, such as snowmobile tours with friends! Near the peak of Mt. Kuromatsunai is a picturesque viewpoint where you can catch a glimpse of both the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan. It's life-changing!

A Journey into the Life & Culture!



Although our plantation is small, we grow quite a variety of crops. Mini tomatoes, Japanese mustard spinach, Swiss chard, kale, red-leaf lettuce, broccoli, cabbage, watermelon, carrots, onions, bell peppers and eggplant. Oh! We also grow yellow mini tomatoes and they' re really sweet like fruit! In Autumn, we grow and harvest delicious root crops such as potatoes, pumpkins, gobo and Japanese radish. Come back again during the beginning of October when you' ll find heaps of mushroom in the backwoods!

A Journey into the Life & Culture!

Today I spent half the day harvesting broccoli at the Imada Farm where Ms. Tomoyo works. I'm Irish so I'm quite familiar with the potato process, but this is the first time I've ever experienced harvesting broccoli like we did today. With a firm hold on the stem, you chop the broccoli right above the stem in a fast motion. It's a very delicate vegetable, so you must move gracefully. For lunch, you can enjoy a delicious soup made of boiled broccoli and cabbage, as well as freshly baked sweet potatoes! It's amazing how fast Ms. Tomoyo can put everything together! Hey, Ms. Tomoyo, would it be alright if I took the tractor out for a drive later?



A Journey into the Life & Culture!



A Journey into the Life & Culture!

It's always fun to travel with a purpose! It's not just simply about arriving at your desired destination, but more so about the process. The people you met along the way and the unexpected experiences you shared, is what creates a wholesome trip.

It's been over 30 years since I married my husband who ran a dairy farm business in this small town of Hokkaido. When I first moved here from Kyushu, I was wondering if I was going to be ok in northern Japan, which as you know, is known for its harsh winters. That feeling didn't last long, as I soon received a very warm welcome from the local people! We started "Farm Inn" after we converted our dairy farm into a potato farm and now live our lives every day thinking it's one of the best decisions we've ever made. Being one of the people in the Kuromatsunai community who welcomes our guests with a smile has become my new reason for living!



A Journey into the Life & Culture!

When I lived in Sapporo, I didn't really leave my house much. I decided to make a big change in my life and move to the countryside, which is where I was able to create a new lifestyle with comfort and joy. I was surprised at how everyone simply accepted me for who I was. The warm atmosphere felt contagious and positively affected my attitude as well! "Kanpai!" (Cheers!) You can't find a Japanese style bar with an atmosphere like this in the big cities. Sorry, brown bear. It looks like it's going to be a boisterous night!

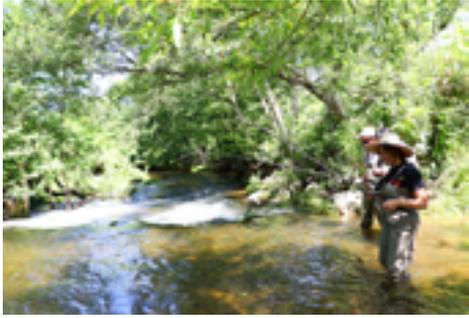
A Journey into the Life & Culture!



When I started my trip at Heathrow Airport, I happen to coincidentally meet a Japanese person who told me, "If you' re going to Japan during the winter season, make sure you visit Niseko!" I took his advice, went on a short trip to Niseko and had a good time. However, I realized I was looking for something more. As a bag craftsman, I was looking for inspiration and a peek into the daily lives of local people. I wanted a deeper insight into the traditions and culture of Hokkaido. With a little bit of luck, I was able to meet with craftsmen living in Kuromatsunai and learn about their techniques and the philosophy behind what they do. It was more than I could ever ask for!

A Journey into the Life & Culture!

Activities



Stream Fishing with locals



Nature Walking



Vegetable picking



Forest work with local woodman



Trekking to the unexplored train station



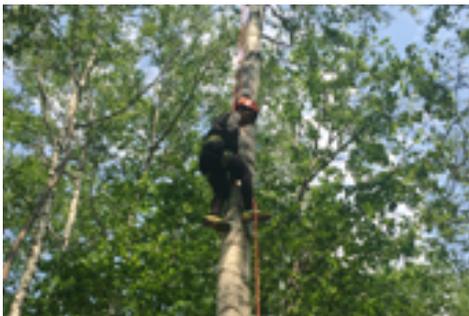
Pottering with local guides



Nothern limit beech forest guide tour



Footpath walking



Tree climbing



Shako-Yaki local BBQ



Japanese Taiko drum



Japanese cultural experience

Go on an Adventure to Experience the Lifestyle and Genuine Atmosphere of the Local Area!"

Stay



1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

1.UTASAI SHIZENNOIE Lodge

2.Ryokan KOMA

3.Ryokan OIKAWA

4.TANPOPO HOUSE

5.Farm inn TOMITA

6.Rider House TAKEDA

7.Soibetsu Forest Lodge

8.L' PIC

Utasai Auto Camping Ground

9.Kuromasunai Bunanomori
Nature School



Enjoy Meeting Local People During Fun Lodging Experiences!

Local Town Shops



1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	

1.toit vert handmade foods

2.Japanese Tofu Maker MIURA

3.KIMURA confectionery

4.Ange de Fromage

5.Farm SEKINE

6.AIZAWA Butchr' s shop

7.TANAKA Fishmonger

8.KUROBA Liquor shop

9.GOIO Liquor shop

10.DIY shop IKEDA

11.SUGAWARA Fishing tackle shop

Enjoy all the Unique Shops in Town!

Local Town Shops



1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12

1.toit vert Il Roadside Station

2.Japanese Restaurant Wagatsuma

3.Restaurant KIRIKA

4.Ramen SYORYU

5.Snacks Cafe KUROHIGE

6.Yakitori SHIN-chan

7.Izakaya DAICHI

8.Karaoke Bar momo

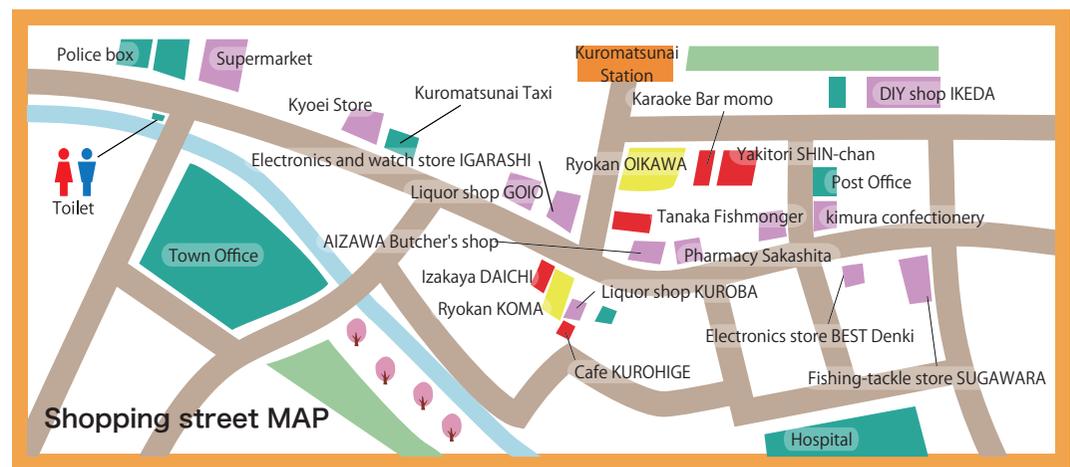
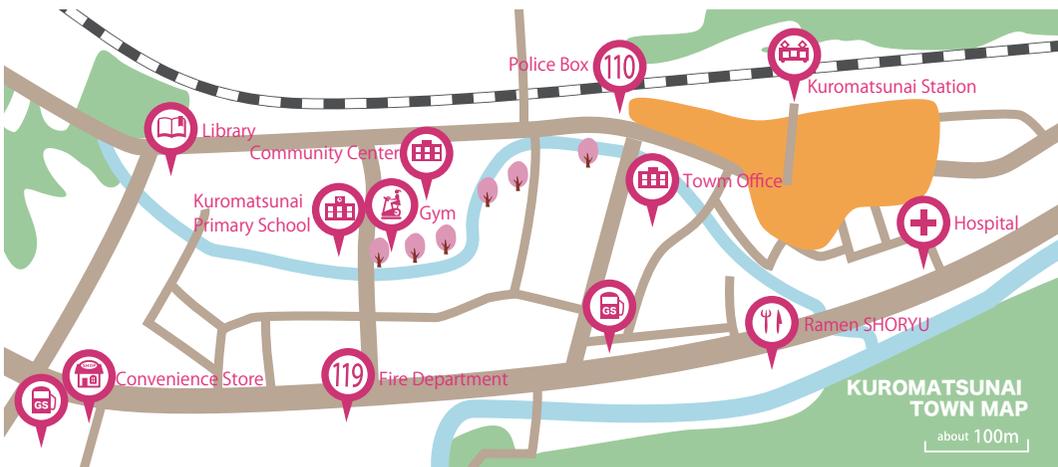
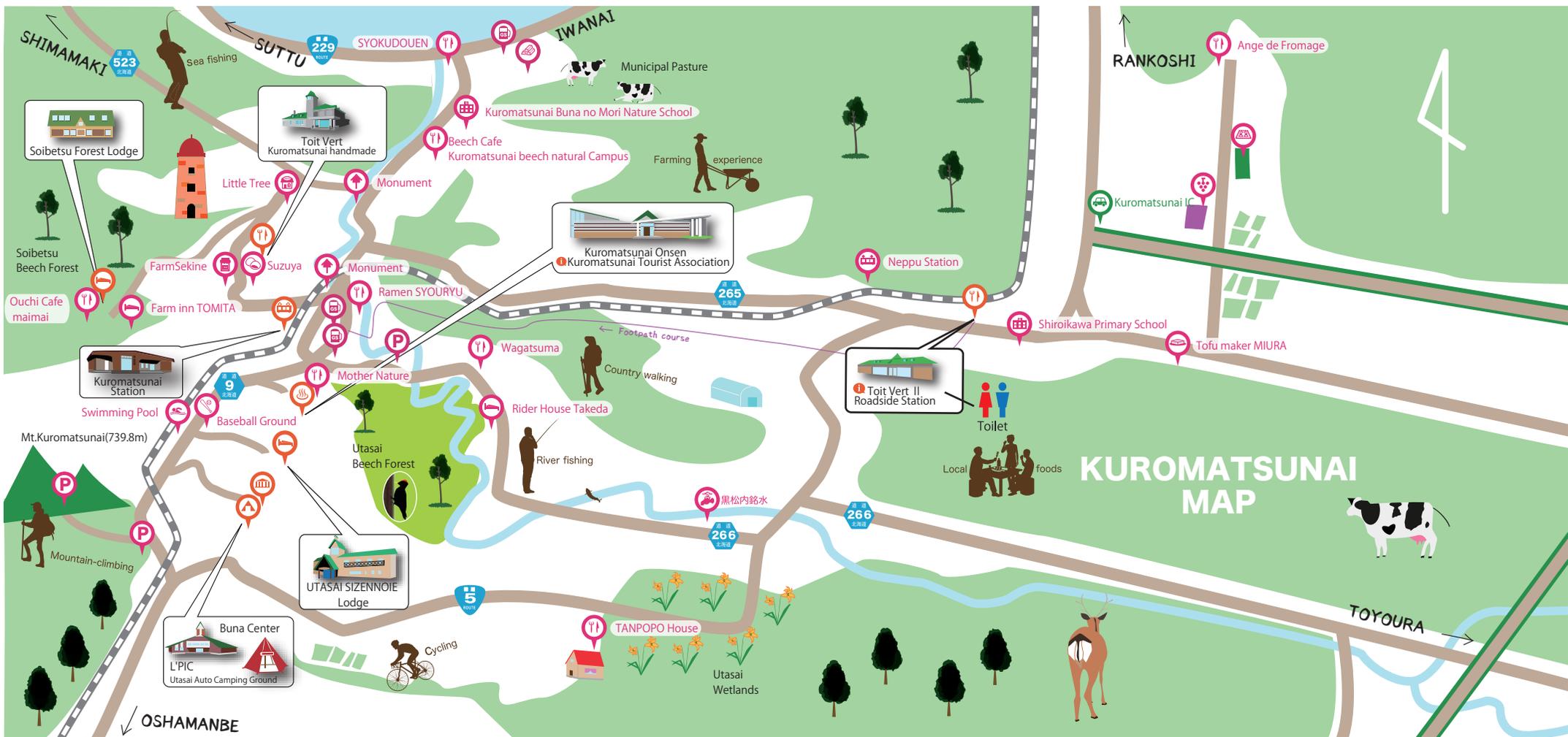
9.Home Cafe maimai

10.Cafe beech

11.Mother Nature

12.SUZUYA

Try the Local Favorite Gourmet Food!





Hokkaido Island



Access /

By Car



- Niseko → 50min
- Lake Toya → 50min
- Otaru → 2hrs
- Hakodate → 2hrs
- Sapporo → 2h30min



Train

- JR Hokkaido / kuromatsunai STN



Kuromatsunai SHOP INFORMATION

SUGAWARA Fishing tackle shop 202 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Tanpopo House 307-7 Toyohoro Kuromatsunai-cho	Ange de Fromage 114 Akaikawa Kuromatsunai-cho
KUROBA Liquor shop 237 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Yakitori SHIN-chan 210 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Japanese Tofu maker MIURA 5 Akaikawa Kuromatsunai-cho
GOIO Liquor shop 263-1 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Snacks Cafe KUROHIGE 238-7 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	KIMURA Confectionery 208 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho
AIZAWA Butcher's shop 224-3 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Karaoke Bar momo 224 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Suzuya 62-4 Asahino Kuromatsunai-cho
DIY shop IKEDA 197 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Izakaya DAICHI 254 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Kyoei Store 272 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho
Tanaka Fishmonger 211 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Wagatsuma 13-4 Nakasato Kuromatsunai-cho	Ramen SYOURYU 328 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho
Mother Nature 565-5 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Restaurant KIRIKA 584 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Cafe beech 34-1 Kuromatsunai-cho
Ryokan KOMA 253 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	SYOKUDOEN Roadside Restaurant 172 Kitasakkai Kuromatsunai-cho	Home Cafe maimai 889 Soibetsu Kuromatsunai-cho

Ryokan OIKAWA
226 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho

Farm inn TOMITA
160 Soibetsu Kuromatsunai-cho

Bunanomori Nature School
76 Minamisakkai Kuromatsunai-cho

Soibetsu Lodge
83-3 Soibetsu Kuromatsunai-cho

Rider House TAKEDA
31 Nakasato Kuromatsunai-cho

Town Facility

UTASAI SIZENNOIE Lodge 584 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho	Kuromatsunai Onsen Spa 545 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho
toit vert Handmade foods 152-4 Mena Kuromatsunai-cho	BUNA Center Museum 521-1 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho
Toit Vert II Roadside Station 8-10 Shiroikawa Kuromatsunai-cho	L'PIC Utasai Auto Camping Ground 521-1 Kuromatsunai Kuromatsunai-cho

<http://kuromatsunai.jp>

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