

AN INSIGHT FOR THE AFFLUENT TRAVELLER

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GUIDE

Asia & Australasia



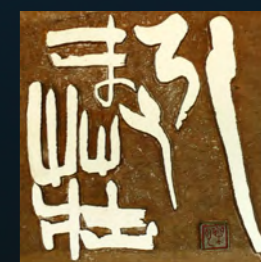
Shirouma-so

TRADITIONAL
ACCOMMODATION
IN THE JAPANESE ALPS



Traditional Accommodation in the Japanese Alps

Shirouma-so



Resting at the base of Hakuba Happo-one ski area, Shirouma-so is a modern Japanese *ryokan* (inn) that seamlessly blends tradition wooden and modern Japanese “*Wa*” architectural styles, resulting in a guest experience that is all at once relaxing and thrilling. Featuring wooden pillars and beams preserved from the Edo period, spacious rooms and breathtaking views of the surrounding Alps, guests can enjoy a refreshing and revitalising stay. These inns have been hosting passing through travellers for over 80

years, while the house’s pillar and beams date back some 200 years. These inns also often use the traditional tatami floors, with paper sliding doors. Each of the Japanese-style tatami rooms has been individually designed to provide unique and relaxing atmospheres.

Shirouma-so serves as a convenient base for skiing, snowboarding and other popular outdoor activities and is a hub for touring Shinshu, Azumino, and other

regions within Nagano – but when not enjoying the stunning surroundings, guests can relax in the natural *onsen* (hot spring). Made with Tago stone, unique for its resemblance to wood grain, the energising spring water is piped in directly from the Hakuba Happo Onsen spring source. The spring of Hakuba is also known as *bijin* – “the bath of beauty” – because the water has some of the highest alkaline content in all of Japan, making a dip in the onsen incredibly beneficial for the skin. Shirouma-so features Japanese-style

tatami rooms, some of which provide inspiring views of the surrounding Japanese Alps. The idea held within Japanese traditional architecture is to evoke a simple, plain setting that allows guests to become more in tune with their surroundings and their own thoughts. Much of Japanese architecture removes the busy, colourful designs of western design, and brings in simplicity instead.

Activities in the Area

The Shirouma-so is designed to be a ski retreat, very close to the mountains. The Hakuba Happo-one ski resort rises to almost 3,000 metres, and boasts some of the best skiing in Asia. The first aerial lift was opened here in 1958, and the 50th anniversary in 2008 was a testament to how successful and loved this resort has come to be. Alongside the mountains and skiing, the area is packed with natural springs, due the volcanic action taking place in the mountains and under the earth. The Happo-one ski resort includes Mt. Karamatsu-Dake at 2696m, Mt. Hakuba-Yari-Ga-Take at 2903m, Mt. Shakushi-Dake at 2812m and Mt. Shirouma-Dake at 2932m. Within these mountain slopes there is the Happo Banks Ski Park. This exciting run of tight turns, twisting banks and exhilarating jumps will challenge even the most experienced ski or snowboard enthusiast. Planned and built by famed snow park designer Hayato 'Bubbles' Maruyama, this park has half-pipes, bowls and sets of jumps. There are 13 different routes down the mountain, and 23 lifts to take you back up, so snow travellers will never be short of variety and choice.

The Tsugaike National Park is a flowing, vast open area, with well-preserved ecosystems and delicate flowers, best seen in the warm summer, or colourful autumn. Snow monkeys can be seen warming themselves in some of the areas hot springs, and Lake Aokiko is another fantastic viewing spot to really appreciate the beauty of the Japanese wilderness. For a cultural experience, the Zenko-ji Temple is a perfect example of Japanese traditional Buddhist practice. Built in the 7th Century, this temple is rumoured to hold the first statue of Buddha brought to Japan.





Modern Amenities

The Shirouma-so has not compromised on modern facilities whilst creating an authentic design, and guests have access to a traditional 'Irori' counter, which is the sunken hearth in the middle of the family room, where families would gather to cook, eat and spend time together. Massage chairs can be used by guests after a day's skiing, to relax sore muscles or to unwind after a day's hiking.

Catering to those skiing or snow-boarding in the area, there is a drying room to get all the gear ready for the next day, and also a storage room for guests to leave their boots, skis and snowboards. There are experienced ski technicians who can adjust skis, fit bindings and give advice on routes and trips guests may want to take. Staff at the Shirouma-so can also give guests access to cheaper lift passes, local rate equipment hire and bus/taxi pick-ups from either ski-lifts or the hotel.

For guests who would like to come as part of a larger party, or host an event at the Shirouma-so, there is a large 'party room' in which up to 20 people can be hosted, with traditional Japanese tatami matting and paper screens. Another particular highlight of a stay at Shirouma-so is the dining room, where guests can sample the excellent home cooking of the owner; enjoy recipes that have been passed down through generations and indulge in the seasonal produce of the Hakuba region.

Shirouma-so presents guests with the choice of unique, individually designed rooms. The orientation of the rooms is the key differentiating element; with those rooms on the second floor facing the south gives guests clear views over the mountains, fresh sunlight and a sense of clarity and space. Some of the rooms facing away from the mountains are more private, traditional rooms that allow peaceful reflection.



LUXURY MOUNTAIN RETREAT OF THE YEAR

HAKUBA ONSEN
RYOKAN SHIROUMA-SO

Sitting peacefully at the foot of the Hakuba Happo-one ski area, Shirouma-so is a traditional Japanese *ryokan* (inn) that seamlessly blends ancient design and innovative amenities. Providing a relaxing and luxurious base for skiers, snowboarders and trekkers, visitors will find Shirouma-so an outstanding introduction to Japanese hospitality. These inns have been hosting passing travellers for over 80 years, while the house's pillar and beams date back some 200 years.

These inns also often use the traditional tatami floors, with paper sliding doors. Not only giving easy access to the nearby ski and snowboarding runs, Shirouma-so also offers the perfect way to relax after a long day on the slopes; made from Tago stone, the onsite natural *onsen* (hot spring) is fed with water directly from the Hakuba Happo Onsen spring source. Known for its high alkaline levels, this spring water is incredibly good for the skin and joint pain and ensures that a stay at Shirouma-so resounds in peace and tranquillity.

Shirouma-so features Japanese-style tatami rooms, some of which provide inspiring views of the surrounding Japanese Alps. The idea held within Japanese traditional architecture is to evoke a simple, plain setting that allows guests to become more in tune with their surroundings and their own thoughts. Much of Japanese architecture removes the busy, colourful designs of western design, and brings in simplicity instead. Home cooked traditional Japanese meals are prepared in the *ryokan* for guests. Shirouma-so presents guests with the choice of very differently designed rooms. The orientation of the rooms is the key differentiating element; with those rooms on the second floor facing the south gives guests clear views over the mountains, fresh sunlight and a sense of clarity and space. Some of the rooms facing away from the mountains are more private, traditional rooms that allow peaceful reflection.



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