
Totaling 10,000km, Japan's Longest Trail: The JAPAN TRAIL® Initiative has Now Launched

Promoting Travel Through Japan on Foot to the World
With "Hiking Nippon", Helping Travelers Discover Japan on Foot

The Japan Long Trail Association (JLTA), a non-profit organization, (President: Jusetsu Setsuda; Representative Director: Toru Nakamura) is pleased to announce the launch of the JAPAN TRAIL® initiative, supported by the Ando Foundation (Chairperson: Koki Ando), and its first route with a distance of 10,000km.

The JLTA as about 30 member organizations, each of which is dedicated to managing long trails around Japan. The JAPAN TRAIL® initiative aims to connect these trails as well as other existing trails including Long-Distance Nature Trails (trails designated by the Ministry of the Environment), mountain trails, and walking paths through Japan. This represents Japan's longest trail stretching all the way from Okinawa to Hokkaido.



In upholding the theme of "Discovering Japan through walks on JAPAN TRAIL®," the initiative advocates and promotes traveling on foot through Japan. In doing so travelers can discover the rich nature, history, and culture of the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which lasted for more than two years, had a major impact on Japanese society as a whole, including the deterioration of citizens' physical and mental health, a decline in children's exposure to nature, and a slump in tourism. On the other hand, one of the positive consequences of the pandemic is that the public has become increasingly nature-oriented and health-conscious. Lifestyles spent outside in

nature have become more prominent in society. Responding to this momentum, the JLTA proudly advocates and promotes traveling on foot through Japan.

The core aims of this initiative are (1) to raise awareness of the importance of physical and mental health and the protection of the natural environment; (2) to provide opportunities for children to be exposed to nature and foster their curiosity; (3) to provide for the demands of returning foreign tourists and help to revive rural areas; and (4) to increase interest in SDGs. As long trails are being planned and developed in many parts of the world, we at the JLTA have high expectations that walking on long trails will become a major movement on a global scale. We will do our best to make JAPAN TRAIL® a symbol of Japan's trail culture and a beloved resource by people all over the world.

[JAPAN TRAIL® OVERVIEW]

Concept: Journeys on Foot Through the Mountain Paths of the Japanese Archipelago

Advocate: JAPAN TRAIL® Advocacy Committee (part of the JLTA)

Sponsors: The Ando Foundation, World Trails Network, and others.

In cooperation with: The Japan Alpine Club (under application), and others.

Project name: JAPAN TRAIL® ~Hiking Nippon~

Project Objective: Advocating and promoting journeys on foot through the mountain paths of the Japanese Archipelago in order to protect the environment, contribute to the wellness of citizens, and revitalize rural areas through tourism.

First Route Total Distance: Approximately 10,000km (a second route is being worked on and will be announced when ready)

JAPAN TRAIL® website: <https://japantrail.jp/en>

Link to the full version of this press release: <https://japantrail.jp/?p=300&lang=en>

Roles of JAPAN TRAIL® Advocacy Committee (part of the JLTA):

- To advocate, propose, and update JAPAN TRAIL® routes
- To disseminate related information through the JAPAN TRAIL® website and app.

Information to be disseminated by the JLTA:

- Route information to both domestic and overseas visitors

- Key information for trail walkers (access and distance of each trail)
- Trail type: Walking Trails, Mountain Trails, or Alpine Trails

What are Long Trails?

Long trails are paths built for people to enjoy a journey on foot. Unlike mountaineering, where the goal is summiting a mountain, long trails allow visitors to experience the nature, history, and culture of the surrounding area while walking along mountain trails, hiking paths, nature trails, country paths, and sometimes even roadways. Trails are often given names that describe the area and its characteristics.

As interest in health and nature has grown in recent years, long trails through nature have been attracting attention and are being developed and planned throughout Japan. These trails are visited by hikers from Japan and abroad, satisfying a growing demand for health-conscious, nature-orientated travel, and contributing greatly to the revitalization of local tourism.

[JAPAN TRAIL® ROUTE OVERVIEW]

JAPAN TRAIL® is a series of long trails managed by the JLTA's approximately 30 member organizations, mountain trails, and Long-Distance Nature Trails (trails designated by the Ministry of the Environment) that traverse the Japanese archipelago from Okinawa to Hokkaido, totaling 10,000km. Information on various sections is now ready and published. As information on other sections become available, it will be posted on the JLTA's website. English information will be added when it is ready.

JAPAN TRAIL® starts in the southern islands of Okinawa and Amami, then pass over the mountains of Kyushu from Mt. Kaimon-dake to Honshu, through San-in and Hokuriku. It then passes through the foothills of Mt. Fuji and traverses the mountains of Joshin-etsu and Tohoku. It ends at Mt. Rausu of the Shiretoko Peninsula, the northeastern point of Hokkaido. Walking JAPAN TRAIL® is a brilliant way to travel through Japan on foot for both residents and travelers from overseas. Whether walking the whole thing or just parts of it, start your adventure "Hiking Nippon", a freely customizable journey on foot.

[Note] About the term "hiking": In Europe and America, the term "hiking" is used for any act of walking other than through "rock, snow, and ice" fields where special gear is needed. It is not only the concept of "day-trip low mountain or hill walking" currently used in Japan, but also covers high mountains and rocky ridge areas that can be climbed on foot. This is considered the global standard.

Long trails, managed by member organizations of the JLTA, that do not fall within the first route of JAPAN TRAIL® are indicated as JAPAN TRAIL PLUS.

[Considerations in Creating the First Route]

- Select routes that can be safely hiked in all four seasons wherever possible.

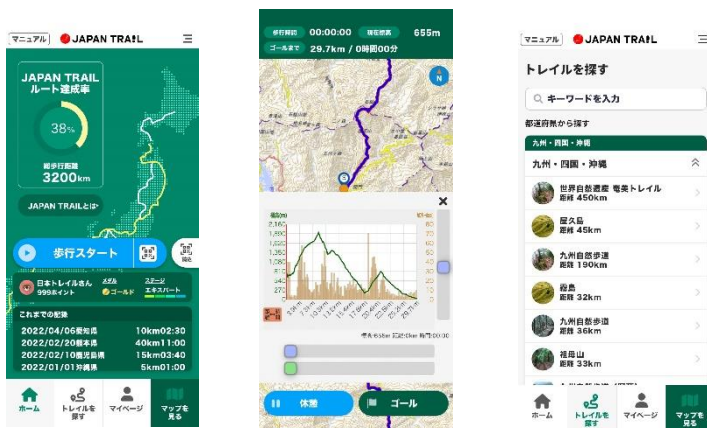
- Use existing mountain and hiking trails, nature trails, walking paths, etc.
- Establish grades of trails in each area to meet international standards.
- Effective use of existing long trails managed by member organizations of the JLTA and others.
- Use existing Long-Distance Nature Trails and other trails designated by local authorities, as well as ancient roads/highways with historical and cultural significance.
- Avoid using paved national, prefectural, and municipal roads as much as possible.

[Future Route Setting]

Currently, about 50% of the first JAPAN TRAIL® route has been confirmed and the JLTA has released it as a tentative route. With continuous efforts focused on route verification, utilizing feedback from visitors, and listening to requests and ideas from involved parties, the route will continue to evolve and strengthen as it approaches completion. It will take many more years to complete the entire route, and even then it will remain fluid, as new long trails are steadily created and other sections are discontinued due to natural disasters, etc. One of our goals is to build JAPAN TRAIL® into a sustainable trail with the cooperation of many people.

[JAPAN TRAIL® APP OVERVIEW]

The JLTA has created the JAPAN TRAIL® app which people can use to find various information about JAPAN TRAIL®. Utilizing topographical maps by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI), the application provides users with route information, hike planning, and sharing functionality in order to support safe walking. It also has a recording system where people can record their walking distances and times. An English version of the app is currently under consideration.



[Details of JAPAN TRAIL® App]

Display of JAPAN TRAIL® route map (GSI map)

Trail maps are displayed in the app on a GSI map, which also includes topography, elevation change and distance.

Trail information

Information on trail sections can be viewed on the app.

My Page function

Users can create their own pages for trail planning, as well as for tracking past records such as distances and time walked, differences in elevation, and calorie consumption.

[JAPAN TRAIL® SPECIAL SHORT MOVIES OVERVIEW]

A series of special short movies have been produced so the JAPAN TRAIL® initiative can reach a wider audience. The movies introduce long trails of Japan to people around the world and provide an overview of the JAPAN TRAIL® route. The audiences of these movies can enjoy seeing the beauty of the mountains, coastlines, spectacular scenery, and the local history and culture, as well as the people they will meet along JAPAN TRAIL®.

We hope that these movies will encourage as many people as possible to take their first steps on JAPAN TRAIL®. Please enjoy learning about JAPAN TRAIL® through these short movies.

YouTube URL : <https://youtu.be/888ntm4iBs8>



[SPECIAL COMMENTS FROM JAPAN TRAIL® SUPPORTERS]

“Long trails help a country re-define itself.”

The JAPAN TRAIL® initiative is something that is very close to my heart, because I believe that the future is dependent on trails and access to nature and access to culture for all of us around the world. The benefits of the JAPAN TRAIL® to Japan are immense. A long trail of this nature can assist with tourism, can assist with recreation, can assist with a sense of national pride and national identity. And we’ve seen this around the world where some of these long-distance trails really help a country redefine itself, in how it sees itself, but in particular,

how it sees itself in connection to landscape, in connection to communities, in connection to rural areas. You must know that your friends and colleagues at the World Trails Network (WTN) stand behind you, and that we are available to come and assist with best practices, with insights and learnings that many of the other long-distance trails have had over the years and decades, to assist the JAPAN TRAIL® in being the success it deserves to be. I wish you every success, going forward one step at a time, on JAPAN TRAIL®.

Galeo Saintz (Chairperson, the World Trails Network (WTN))

“The longer you walk, the more you experience the diversity of history and culture.”

A quarter of a century has passed since we began building the Shin-etsu Trail, which runs along the border between Nagano and Niigata Prefectures. This trail leads through the forests of one of Japan's snowiest regions. It now has many hikers who come to enjoy the beech forests, and the local villages at the foot of the mountains, that survive with the forests' blessings. Walking is a way to look at oneself, to refresh oneself, and to interact with other walkers and local people. Now that the concept of JAPAN TRAIL® has become a reality, walking routes from one end of Japan to the other will be connected as an extension of the Shin-etsu Trail, creating new discoveries and more diverse exchanges. “The longer you walk, the more you can experience the diversity of history and culture, and the warmer you can communicate with people,” said Noriyoshi Kato, the late backpacker who established the concept of long trails in Japan. I hope that JAPAN TRAIL® will lead to the reaffirmation of many walking routes and the cultivation of trail culture in Japan.

Hiroshi Kimura (Representative Director, Shin-etsu Trail Club;
Professor, Center for Advanced Study of Tourism, Hokkaido University)

“Calling for more community-based action by local citizens in the development of long trails”

The Hiroshima Wangan Trail (HWT) is a long trail initiated, developed, maintained, and operated by local citizens. It is a trail by citizens for citizens, supported by the generous donations and hard work of local volunteers, and without relying on subsidies or grants from the public sector. We are pleased that the HWT, which was fueled by the voices of regular citizens who said “Let’s build a long trail in Hiroshima!” is now a part of JAPAN TRAIL®. We pledge to make further progress on the HWT and look forward to the full opening of JAPAN TRAIL®. Over 9 years we have created a course that covers a distance of 423.8 km including optional extension routes, access and escape routes. If the number of community-based groups that develop long trails for their communities, like ours, increases, more trails that are closer to and attract local citizens will be established. Now is the time to mobilize the power of citizens and start walking toward the realization of the great dream of JAPAN TRAIL®.

Hironori Tagawa (Chairman, Hiroshima Bay Trail Council)

[About the JLTA (Japan Long Trails Association)]

- Representative Director: Toru Nakamura

- Number of member organizations: 29 (as of June 16th, 2022)
- Established: November 2015
- Address: Japan Long Trail Association, The Momofuku Ando Center, Okubo 1100, Komoro City, Nagano, 384-0071, Japan
- URL: https://longtrail.jp/index_e.html
- Objective: To promote long trails, which are in growing demand worldwide due to the spread of health-conscious and nature-oriented lifestyles. The organization is engaged in multifaceted public relations and promotional activities aimed at sustainable long trails and building information networks.

[About the Ando Foundation]

- Chairperson: Koki Ando (President, Chief Executive Officer of NISSIN FOODS HOLDINGS CO., LTD.)
- Founder: Momofuku Ando (Founder of NISSIN FOODS)
- Established: March 1983
- Address: Masumi-cho 8-25, Ikeda City, Osaka 563-0041, Japan
- URL: <https://www.ando-zaidan.jp/>
- Objective: Based on the philosophy that "food and sports are the two wheels that support health", to support the promotion of sports among the public, especially the youth, and to conduct projects that promote the development of food science, the cultivation of inventive minds, and dietary education, thereby contributing to the development of youth who are sound in mind and body and the improvement of food culture.

Disclaimer:

- The JAPAN TRAIL® Advocacy Committee (part of the JLTA) makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of information related to JAPAN TRAIL®. However, we do not guarantee the accuracy of the information or the safety of the trails.
- Routes may change. Make sure to confirm with the trail management office etc. in the area you plan to visit regarding the latest trail information prior to your departure.
- The JAPAN TRAIL® Advocacy Committee assumes no responsibility for any disasters or accidents that may occur on JAPAN TRAIL®.

Please download the materials in the release from the following link:

Downloadable materials in the release (PASS: japantrail)

URL : <https://bit.ly/3O6ACFr>

[Contact regarding this press release]

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