**Rusutsu**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

10

**Intermediate Runs**

12

**Advanced Runs**

15

**Total Runs**

37

**Lifts**

21

**Chairs**

14

**Drags**

3

**Gondola Cable Cars**

4

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

8.4m (28ft).

**Overview**

While it may not be Japan’s best-known ski resort internationally, Rusutsu is the largest ski area in Japan’s Hokkaido prefecture, with over 35 runs and 21 lifts. Like nearby Niseko, it boasts incredible skiing scenery, thanks to its proximity to the stunning Mt Yotei.

Of course for most skiers the main appeal of Japan’s resort is its snowsure reputation, and Rusutsu is no different, receiving more than 10m (33ft) on average throughout the ski season. But it’s quality more than quantity that really counts when it comes to the white stuff, and Rusutsu doesn’t disappoint, offering crisp, feather-light powder that makes slaloming down the slopes even more satisfying.

Rusutsu differs from most other well known Japanese ski areas in that its base is made up almost entirely of a giant hotel complex, more than 20 storeys high and home to multiple restaurants, bars and other activities – almost like a cruise liner parked at the base of the slopes.

In the summer Rusutsu’s operation is transformed into a giant theme park that emerges from beneath the snow, meaning the resort benefits from year round custom.

**Location**

Rusutsu is located in the southwestern region of Japan's most northerly island, Hokkaido.

**Website**

http://en.rusutsu.co.jp

**Piste Map**

http://en.rusutsu.co.jp/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/trailmap.pdf

**Hit The Slopes**

Rusutsu's ski area is spread across three mountains. Skiing directly above the resort is available on West Mountain, while the majority of terrain is spread across the gondola-linked East Mountain and its lift-linked neighbour, Mount Isola, which together have about three-quarters of the 42km (26 miles) of runs.

There is skiing for all ability levels in Rusutsu ski resort and, in common with most major Japanese ski areas, almost all lifts are either chairlifts or gondolas.

Beginners, who can make use of English-language ski lessons, will find easy green trails close to the resort, but also runs to progress on to further away from the complex. Intermediates have most of the resort's terrain open to them, while advanced skiers and boarders should be pleased with more challenges than most Japanese ski areas offer.

Among the other options is tree skiing and a glut of off-piste terrain – in fact, Rusutsu has a reputation for untracked powder lasting longer than at other major Japanese ski area. There’s also a terrain park to explore for boarders and freestylers, while night skiing is a regular activity on West Mountain.

Thanks to its legendary snowfall, the ski season in Rusutsu is long and runs from early December until late April.

**Rusutsu**

**Resort**

286

**Base**

286

**Top**

994

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Although Rusutsu is largely made up of one giant hotel complex, it’s a very well equipped facility with lots to do besides ski and board.

On the snow, there's cross-country skiing, snow rafting (riding down the slopes on large inflatable rafts), snow tubing, horse riding, orienteering, snowmobiling, and dog sledding to choose from.

Options in the warmth range from the chance to try traditional Japanese methods of bread baking to participating in a Japanese arts and crafts class. The giant Rusutsu Resort Hotel offers numerous indoor activities, including a gym, swimming pool with wave machine, amusement arcade, games room and a carousel ride. There is also an indoor bouldering wall for climbing practice.

No visit to Hokkaido is complete without a soak in a traditional Japanese *onsen* (hot-spring baths), which can be found in the resort.

**Family Fun**

Rusutsu ski resort is a good choice for families due to the safe and convenient nature of the giant complex as well as its easy-to-ride lifts, high service standards, affordable dining and non-ski family fun activities.

Rusutsu’s ski school can provide group and private lessons for children aged four and above, who can then progress on to the numerous green runs when proficient.

The hotel has an indoor nursery for children up to six years old and there’s also a large leisure pool complex and games room for older kids.

**Retail Therapy**

All of the shops in Rusutsu are within the hotel complex, concentrated in a central retail shopping centre. This manages to accommodate nearly 30 shops, so most needs can be met. A new ‘premium rentals’ store is the latest addition – selling and renting premium ski gear and equipment on site. Local products to look out for include wood and leather crafts.

**Splashing Out**

A day trip to provincial capital Sapporo is a worthwhile outing and is relatively easy to reach by bus (although it's best to be accompanied by a Japanese speaker). The annual Sapporo Snow Festival ([www.snowfes.com](http://www.snowfes.com)) sees the creation of amazing snow carvings the size of large buildings. This week-long event, which is usually held during the month of February, attracts visitors from around the world.

**Apres Ski**

Après-ski in Rusutsu is low-key. Visitors may like to start the evening with a visit to the traditional *onsen* (men and women shower and bathe separately in the communal volcanic pools, but they might then meet up in a mixed-sex thermal pool).

Alternatively, opt for a traditional Japanese tea ceremony in the Dolce tearoom, or visit one of the karaoke rooms for a bit of a knees-up.

There are half a dozen bars and night spots in the Rusutsu Resort Hotel, including the Obrist bar; or for sports events, check out the bar named after the one sport guests are unlikely to see played here, Cricket.

**Eating Out**

Each of the 12 restaurants in Rusutsu is located within the large Rusutsu Resort Hotel building. However, the resort does manage to offer a great range of global cuisine, enabling guests on half-board deals to eat at a different establishment every night.

For traditional food from the local Hokkaido region, try Kazahana in the Rusutsu Tower. The restaurant specialises in Japanese cuisine made using fresh and natural ingredients. Kazahana also features a traditional Japanese Teppanyaki bar where you can watch the chef cook, serving up food straight from a large hot plate.

There are more options in the huge hotel’s north and south wings, including the Belle vue (South Wing), which offers a fusion of French and Hokkaido cuisine. Additionally, there’s Italian fare on offer in the Costa Terrazza (North Wing), a Scandinavian smorgasbord at the Viking Buffet in the Crescent Hall, and a Bavarian meat themed “Oktober Fest” restaurant, also located in the North Wing.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Sapporo New Chitose Airport (CTS).

Distance to resort: 100km (63 miles).

Driving time: 1 hour 30 minutes.

**Getting Around**

As all facilities are concentrated within one large complex, all of which can be easily reached on foot; there is therefore no need for transportation between facilities.

**Hotels**

The Rusutsu Resort Hotel is the main - and in most respects only - option in terms of accommodation in Rusutsu, albeit with a number of options to suit different tastes and budgets within the giant complex. There are however, log cabins and other budget accommodation options available in the vicinity. Alternatively, it is also possible to stay in the nearby village and drive to the slopes.

**Rustusu Cottages**

These cosy stand-alone buildings sleep up to six guests and are built on earthquake proof pillars, allowing guests to sleep even more soundly. All of the cottages are ski-in/ski-out.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

13 Izumikawa

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Rusutsu

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Japan

**Telephone**

+81 136 463 111

**Website**

http://en.rusutsu.co.jp

**Nanko Hotel**

If you don’t want to stay in Rusutsu itself, the nearest accommodation is in the town of Kutchan located midway between Rusutsu and Niseko - so a good choice if you want to ski at both resorts. The Nanko Hotel is a typical Japanese business hotel with comfortable rooms and attentive staff.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

3 Nishi

**Neighborhood**

Minami 2-jo

**Locality**

Kutchan-cho

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

Abuta-gu

**Postcode**

044-0032

**Country**

Japan

**Telephone**

+81 136 220 237

**Website**

www.nanko-hotel.com

**Rustusu Log Houses**

The resort’s Log Houses are available to rent for larger groups of six to 24 people. They provide an interesting contrast to the giant hotel complex and are well equipped, snug, wooden buildings.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

13 Izumikawa

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Rusutsu

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Japan

**Telephone**

+81 136 463 111

**Website**

http://en.rusutsu.co.jp

**Highland Lodge**

Providing clean but functional western or Japanese-style rooms, the Highland Lodge is ideal for those looking for conveniently located budget accommodation.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

13 Izumikawa

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Rusutsu

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Japan

**Telephone**

+81 136 463 111

**Website**

http://en.rusutsu.co.jp

**The Westin Rusutsu Resort**

This 4-star hotel is the tower section of the huge complex, which has been taken over by international hotel operator Starwood and re-branded as a Westin for winter 2015/16. The Westin offers the most luxurious accommodation in the giant resort hotel, and still offers a superb selection of facilities.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

133 Izumikawa

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Rusutsu

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Japan

**Telephone**

+81 136 462 111

**Website**

www.westinrusutsu.com

**The Rusutsu Resort Hotel**

This 4-star hotel can accommodate more than 2,000 guests and has a staggering range of facilities, from swimming pools to games rooms. The hotel’s accommodation is divided into three main sectors (the Rusutsu Tower, the complex’s fourth sector, is now under separate management): the North and South Wings both offer fairly conventional hotel rooms, while the third option is Canadian-style log chalets.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

13 Izumikawa

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Rusutsu

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Japan

**Telephone**

+81 136 463 111

**Website**

http://en.rusutsu.co.jp