

The Niseko week checklist.

Five decisions before you book. Written in Tokyo, for Australians doing Niseko this winter. By Steve.

01

WHICH BASE

Pick the area for your group

Four linked resorts, one United pass — but where you sleep still shapes the week. First-timers and powder hounds shouldn't automatically pick the same base.

YOUR GROUP	BASE	WHY
Default / first trip	Grand Hirafu	Most restaurants, English everywhere, nightlife. Walkable village. Busiest in peak weeks.
Family / park	Hanazono	Quieter, best terrain park, good shuttle access. Fewer restaurants.
Quiet cruise	Niseko Village	Longest cruising runs, family hotels, ski-in/out. Limited village dining.
Beginners / quiet	Annupuri	Best beginner terrain, few commercial facilities. Isolation by design.



DECIDE FIRST

02

GETTING THERE

Book the New Chitose → Hirafu bus with your flights

Direct bus from New Chitose Airport is 2.5–3 hours (Hokkaido Resort Liner / White Liner to Hirafu Welcome Center). Book ahead for Christmas, New Year, and AU holidays. Free shuttles connect all four areas — skip a car unless you're touring Hokkaido.

CTS direct bus

Sapporo overnight

Skip car (usually)



DECIDE WITH FLIGHTS

03

LIFT PASS & FOUR RESORTS

Buy the Niseko United All Mountain Pass

One pass covers Grand Hirafu, Hanazono, Niseko Village, and Annupuri. Multi-day passes offer best value. Use free shuttles between areas — most people ski one area per day rather than hopping. Hirafu trees on powder mornings; watch avalanche warnings and closed boundaries.



DECIDE WITH BASE

04

FIRST NIGHT EAT

Hirafu walkable dining — book the popular spots

Dozens of restaurants within a 10-minute walk of most Hirafu lodging. English menus common. Walk-ins fine for ramen and izakaya; book ahead for fine dining and peak-week favourites. Filter by diet, kids, or English menu on the site.



BOOK BEFORE YOU FLY

05

WHEN TO BOOK

Sep–Nov is the booking window

Aussie Christmas through early January is the busiest stretch. Late January–February often means better powder and easier bookings (watch Chinese New Year). English ski schools fill early — November at the latest for peak weeks.

SEP

Flights & lodge

OCT

CTS bus, school lane

NOV

School deposit, night-one dinner

DEC

Leftovers only



START NOW

WRITE IT DOWN, THEN BOOK IT

Write it down, then book it.

Fill this in once the five decisions are made. Stick it on the fridge, or screenshot it for the group chat.

Your trip

DATES IN NISEKO

WHO'S COMING (ADULTS / KIDS & AGES)

LANDING AT (NEW CHITOSE / OTHER)

CTS → NISEKO BY

HOME BASE (HIRAFU / HANAZONO / VILLAGE / ANNUPURI)

SKI SCHOOL & LANE (GROUP / PRIVATE / KIDS)

LODGE & BOOKING REF

NIGHT-ONE DINNER (NAME, TIME, DIETARY)

Booked?

- | | |
|---|------------|
| ☐ Flights to Japan (into New Chitose) | SEP |
| ☐ Lodge for the full week | SEP |
| ☐ CTS → Hirafu bus booked | OCT |
| ☐ English ski school lane chosen, deposit paid | NOV |
| ☐ Night-one dinner reserved | NOV |
| ☐ Niseko United All Mountain Pass plan | PRE-FLIGHT |
| ☐ Travel insurance that covers skiing | PRE-FLIGHT |

Three things that catch people out

- **Aussie Christmas weeks** mean lift queues, restaurant waits, and sold-out ski schools — book early or aim for late Jan–Feb.
- **Free shuttles get crowded** at peak times — most people ski one area per day rather than hopping.
- **Tree skiing has boundaries** — watch avalanche warnings and closed gates, especially on Hirafu powder mornings.

SCAN FOR THE FULL GUIDES



Which base

Compare all four areas

bestniseko.com/resorts


Get there

CTS bus, shuttles, car

bestniseko.com/get-there


Eat tonight

Filter by diet or English menu

bestniseko.com/eat


English ski schools

Group, private, kids programs

bestniseko.com/schools

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