

A report from a cyclist

My cycling pals said, "Numata in spring is the best!" I wasn't sure what they actually meant. What's so special about farmland before the planting season? Anyway, I came and started cycling down the roads smoothly. First I made a stop and took some pictures at Ashimoi Station. "Is this the smell of spring?" What I felt was the smell of the soil in paddy fields

where snow was left here and there. Then I found a white wagtail feeding on a worm in a paddy field. Another sign of spring! "Hmmm, not bad!" I said to myself. Gradually, my feeling ran high and I headed to Moe-no-Oka Hill, famous for lupines in summertime. It was too early to see any, though. It was a hard climb up the steep hill, but I managed to reach the hilltop lookout. There, I looked down and saw the checkerboard pattern of the unplanted paddy fields all around. The contrast of the colors was so impressive: the

brown paddy fields below, the blue clear sky above, and the white snow-covered peaks of the Taisetsu Mountains in the distance. Feeling so refreshed but with cold feet and hands, I headed for town to buy something warm to drink. A can of hot coffee was just the thing to warm me up. When I finally got back to Horoshin Onsen, I rewarded myself with a bath there. Warm inside the bath water, I was thankful to my cycling pals and decided to buy them a bottle of local sake called Yuki Nagori.

Attractions!

1 Hotaru no Sato

- Address: Horoshin 377 Numata-cho Uryu-gun
- Phone: 0164-35-1188
- (Horoshin Hot Spring Hotaru-kan)
- Viewing time: Early July~Early August
- Between early July and early August, fireflies appear in large numbers. You can see more than 2,000 of them at a time.



2 Hotaru no Sato Auto Campground

- Address: Horoshin 612 Numata-cho Uryu-gun
- Phone: 0164-35-1166
- Open: Early May~Late October
- Fee: 2,100 yen for one plot
- This campground has two sections: Ikoji no Mori and Hotaru no Sato. In this well-equipped facility provides a variety of lodging options.

3 Fossil Museum in Numata-cho

- Address: Horoshin 381-1 Numata-cho Uryu-gun
- Phone: 0164-35-1029
- Open: April 29~Nov. 3
- Hours: 9:00~17:00
- Saturday and a day before a holiday 9:30~18:00
- Closed: Monday
- (On weekdays that follow a national holiday)
- Fees: Adults 500 yen, Children 300 yen
- Fossils found in Numata are on display. You can experience fossil digging and make a replica of a fossil.



4 Horoshin Hot Spring Hotaru-kan

- Address: Horoshin 377 Numata-cho Uryu-gun
- Phone: 0164-35-1188
- Hours: 10:00~22:00
- Fees: adults 500 yen, children 250 yen, free for children below school age
- Open all the year round
- Located amid unspoiled nature that is home to fireflies, this sulfur hot spring gives relief for people suffering from skin diseases, rheumatism, diabetes and neuralgia.

Numata

Yohtaka Andon Festival in Numata

- Numata Yohtaka Andon Festival is one of the three Andon Festivals in Hokkaido. It is held on the 4th Friday and Saturday in August every year. A dozen andon painted with human figures of various sizes are carried along the streets. The climax of the festival comes when large andons crash into each other. This festival was brought here in 1977 from Oyabe-shi in Toyama Prefecture, the hometown of the founder of Numata-cho, Mr. Kisaburo Numata.
- Phone: Numata-cho Andon Festival Committee 0164-35-2231



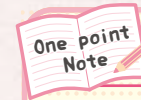
5 Ashimoi Station

- Address: Ebishima Numata-cho Uryu-gun
- This old station was used in the NHK morning drama "Suzuran" and has since been opened to visitors. "Ashimoi" means "live for tomorrow", reflecting the positive character of the drama's heroin. The station's real name is Ebishima.



6 Moe no Oka

- Address: Hokuryu Numata-cho Uryu-gun
- In the NHK morning drama, the heroin Moe came to this hill when she was sad or had troubles. There are two impressive trees on the top, where you can get a fantastic view of the surrounding mountains, farmlands, and towns.



For enjoyable cycling!

● Tips for a smooth hill ride

The most demanding part is riding up a hilly road. But some people love it because a difficult hill ride gives a sense of achievement. Anyway, let me give you some tips to an easier hill ride.

◎For fast pedaling, use higher gears!

Forceful pedaling at lower gears causes lactic acid to build up in your muscles, leading to rapid exhaustion.

◎Use your arm muscles

Pull your left arms up, when you hit on a right pedal and vice versa. Try to imagine to transfer your entire body weight to the pedals. Don't hold the handle bar too tight, you will feel more exhausted.

◎Try some standing pedaling

On a standing pedaling, a different part of your muscles will be activated. And it refreshes your muscles. Riding on a lower gear makes lactate accumulate. So keep the gear at one or two levels higher than sitting position, then put your body weight on pedals. This is the most effective way on a hilly ride. You will feel refreshed!

● Say "Hi!" to fellow cyclists!

Say hello by raising your right hand when you see fellow cyclists and tour riders on the roads! Cyclists and riders tend to feel a fellowship. They would enjoy greeting other riders! When you raise your right hand, you are holding the handlebar by one hand. It could be dangerous. So don't force yourself on a dangerous road and when you are tired.

● Watch out for the Sun!

On a bike, because of the stream, we don't feel too hot and stay longer in the sun. Before we know it, we may get serious sunburn. The best protection? Wear a long-sleeved shirt!

◎Apply Sun screen!

Apply high SPF sun screen on the exposed part of your skin! Your face, neck, and hands (or the exposed part of your hands between your cuffs and gloves) should be protected. Apply sun screen every three hours because you may get sweaty. On cloudy days, ultraviolet rays are unexpectedly stronger. Be cautious!

