

野生きのこ Yasei Kinoko - Wild Mushrooms of Japan, by Thierry Consigny

•@

Getting started

All the year, but notably from August to November, one of the many pleasures of Northern Gunma is to picking mushrooms in the beautiful grassland and woodland of Gunma.

What to pick?

Start your fungi expert career in Japan with a few easy picks:

Akanbo, or Kuritake	Rikobo, or Hanai-iguchi	Chokodake, or Hotei-shimeji	more to come
more to come	more to come	more to come	more to come

For fun

Kanbatake <i>a 5,500 years trip into neolithic ages</i>	more to come	more to come	more to come
--	--------------	--------------	--------------

Find the expert

Compared to Europe, very few people in Japan are picking mushrooms as they are afraid of food poisoning.

In France, the amateur mushroom picker would turn to their local pharmacist as he is generally the "fungi" expert. In Japan, I would strongly recommend to start picking a few, easily identifiable, mushrooms, and have the locals helping you to confirm the variety of the mushroom that you picked. Generally, I have found that the local experts ("Kinoko Hakase") were very often found managing the local "soba restaurant" (buckwheat noodle), as they serve many dishes with mushrooms and other "sansai" (wild vegetables) on their menu.

Beware of mosquitos, bees, snakes and bears



It could be a good idea to spread a mosquitos reppellent in July or August, when mosquitos are very active. Pay also attention to bees and snakes bites. There are also many bears in the Northern Gunma woodland, and you may encounter them in early spring, just after hibernation, or in late autumn, when food is becoming scarce and when they approach the nearby farms for eating apples, chesnuts or kakis. You may put a bell on your mushroom basket, carry a small radio (not exactly what you might prefer for the quiet of the area), or just like I do, hit from time to time trees with a stock to notify your presence.

Wear

Dress with long sleeves. Avoid the short pans and prefer hiking or walking shoes to tennis shoes. Japanese forests are usually not so well maintained as they could be in Europe and they are many thorny bushes around. I usually wear very simple white gloves made out of cotton and called "*gunte*" in Japanese.

Wearing a colourful dress such as a red raincoat or k-way will make you more visible for hunters, or to bears

Equipment

Usual golden rule, do not mix mushrooms unless you are certain of their identification.



Invest a few thousand yen in a traditional bamboo basket, called "*seoikago*" in Japanese. There are of various size and very convenient, with holders for shoulders on both sides.

The slopes in Gunma's forests can be very steep and this basket is very adapted for ascending and descending the many hills you will hike.

Bring a knife and eventually a small plant transplanter, in case you want to check the presence of a volva for some of your picks.

Finally, ring a notebook and a pen to take notes whilst on the field on the habitat near your picks.

•@

[back to INDEX](#)