



# **SAMURAI TOURS**

*Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan*

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[www.samuraitours.com](http://www.samuraitours.com)

## **Best of Hokkaido**



15 Days / 14 Nights

## Best of Hokkaido

### Tour Overview

The Best of Hokkaido tour focuses on the northernmost of the main islands, Japan's last frontier. Hokkaido is a natural wonderland of mountain ranges, deep caldera lakes, active volcanoes, numerous thermally-heated mineral springs and virgin forests. The attitudes of the inhabitants are akin to those of the pioneers of the American West, but still unmistakably Japanese.

### Destinations

*Okhotsk, Sapporo, Sounkyo Onsen, Abashiri, Utoro Onsen, Shiretoko National Park, Lake Akan, Lake Akan Crane Center, Kushiro Marshland, Kushiro, Noboribetsu Onsen, Upopoy Ainu Museum, Hakodate*

### Tour Factors



Cultural Immersion



Pace



Physical Activity



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## Tour Details

Among the Japanese, Hokkaido has become synonymous with sensational food, stunning scenery and some of the best onsens in Japan. Because of this, Hokkaido has become a popular vacation destination for the Japanese. We slow the pace down on this tour to allow you to relax and to really enjoy and appreciate Hokkaido to its fullest.

You'll enjoy Sapporo, Hokkaido's largest city and host to the 1972 Winter Olympics, with its many fine restaurants and the secluded beauty of the Shiretoko National Park. You will tour Sounkyo Gorge in the middle of the beautiful Daisetsuzan National Park with its soaring mountain ranges, visit Noboribetsu Onsen, one of Japan's largest and most popular hot springs resorts and walk along the rim of an active volcano at Lake Toya. You will explore the morning market of Hakodate, where you can have the local specialties of crab, sea urchin or squid prepared for you for breakfast, and learn about Hokkaido's original inhabitants, the Ainu, whose culture almost disappeared until recent efforts of restoration. You will visit the Akan International Crane Center where research is being done to bring the cranes back from the brink of extinction.

Tour Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Sapporo, the Host of the 1972 Winter Olympics</li><li>✓ Grilled Lamb Dinner at the Sapporo Beer Garden</li><li>✓ Shiretoko Goko Nature Walk</li><li>✓ Shiretoko Peninsula Cruise</li><li>✓ Lake Akan</li><li>✓ Akan Crane Center</li><li>✓ Noboribetsu Onsen</li><li>✓ Upopoy National Ainu Museum</li></ul>
Tour Inclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Travel Guard Gold Policy (for American tour members only)</li><li>✓ Domestic Airfare from Tokyo to Sapporo</li><li>✓ One Ride on a Shinkansen (bullet train)</li><li>✓ Meeting service at the arrival airport</li><li>✓ Sending service to the appropriate train station</li><li>✓ Baggage transfer from city to city</li><li>✓ Electronic version of Tour Handbook and Japanese History</li></ul>
Tour Exclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ International airfare is NOT included.</li><li>✗ A printed itinerary is not included</li><li>✗ Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included</li></ul>

# Map



## Tour Destinations

- 📍 Tokyo
- 📍 Sapporo
- 📍 Sounkyo Onsen
- 📍 Abashiri
- 📍 Utoro Onsen
- 📍 Shiretoko National Park
- 📍 Akan National Park
- 📍 Lake Akan
- 📍 Akan Crane Center
- 📍 Noboribetsu Onsen
- 📍 Upopoy Ainu Village and Museum
- 📍 Hakodate

# Itinerary

## **Day 1 Arrive in Tokyo**

After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met at Tokyo's Narita Airport by a Samurai Tours meeting staff member. They will then purchase a limousine bus ticket for you and help you board the bus to the hotel. After checking in, the evening is free. No meals are included.

**Travel: 1-1/2 Hours; Walking: Light**

## **Day 2 Fly to Sapporo; Grilled Lamb Dinner at the Sapporo Beer Garden**

After breakfast, we will travel to Tokyo's Haneda airport and you will fly to Sapporo's New Chitose Airport. We will then travel into Sapporo, the largest city on Hokkaido and the host of the 1972 Winter Olympics. In the evening, we will have dinner at the Sapporo Beer Garden, located next to the original Sapporo Beer Brewery where you can try the local specialty of grilled lamb, cooked yourself at the table. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant included.

**Travel: 3 1/2 Hours; Walking: Light**

## **Day 3 Sapporo - Ainu Museum, Odori Park, Sapporo TV Tower, Nijo Fish Market, Tanuki Shopping Arcade**

After breakfast we will visit the Sapporo Botanical Garden to visit a small but excellent Ainu Museum. The garden also has a virgin forest that shows what the surrounding area looked like more than 150 years ago. We will walk along Odori Park, the venue for the world famous Sapporo Snow Festival held annually in early February. At the end of Odori Park, we will visit the observation deck of the Sapporo TV Tower. The observation deck offers nice views of the park and the surrounding city. The tower is just under 150 meters tall, and the observation deck is at an elevation of 90 meters. Next, we will visit the Nijo Fish Market where locals visit to shop for fresh local produce and seafood such as crabs, salmon eggs, sea urchin and various fresh and prepared fish. We will continue with a lunch at a fresh seafood rice bowl ("kaisendon") lunch. After lunch, you will have free time to explore the Tanuki Shopping Arcade. The unique aspect of this mall is that you will find traditional merchants selling kimonos, tea or incense side-by-side with modern stores specializing in computers, software or state-of-the-art electronics. The evening is free. Breakfast at the hotel and lunch at a local restaurant included.

**Travel: N/A; Walking: Heavy**

## **Day 4 Travel to Sounkyo Onsen - Waterfalls and Kurodake Ropeway**

We travel with overnight bags only to Sounkyo Onsen where we will find two beautiful waterfalls, Ginga no Taki (Milky Way Falls) and Ryusei no Taki (Shooting Star Falls), which cascade down the 100 meter high cliffside. We will be making two stops at Michi no Eki (roadside stations). Next we will travel to the Kurodake Ropeway which provides visitors easy access into the higher parts of Daisetsuzan National Park. From here, you will be able to view the surrounding mountain ranges (weather permitting). We will retrieve the luggage upon arrival at the lodging. Buffet breakfast and dinner at the lodging are included.

**Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Light**

## **Day 5 Travel to Abashiri - Tokoro Archaeological Site, Ice Drift Museum**

We travel with all bags only to the city of Abashiri on the northeastern coast of Hokkaido. Upon arrival, we will visit the Ice Flow Drift Museum. Every winter, a huge ice flow from a Russian river slams into the northeastern portion of Hokkaido. Here, at this museum, we will learn about this fascinating natural phenomenon. After the museum, we will check into the ryokan where we will be staying in Abashiri. Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at the hotel included.

**Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium**

## **Day 6 Abashiri - Northern People's Museum, Abashiri Prison Museum; Genseikaen; Travel to Utoro Onsen**

We start the day by touring the the Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples. Here, we will get our first exposure to the Ainu culture as well as other similar indigenous cultures of the northern hemisphere. Next, we will stop at Ice Flow Drift Museum. Every winter, a huge ice flow from a Russian river slams into the northeastern portion of Hokkaido. Here, at this museum, we will learn about this fascinating natural phenomenon. We will finish our visit to Abashiri at the Abashiri Prison Museum. Abashiri Prison was initially constructed in the late 19th century, but the prison gained national fame through yakuza movies in the 1960s and became known as the Alcatraz of Japan. The museum illustrates the daily life of prisoners and has more than a dozen buildings and structures from the old prison. To finish the day we will travel to Utoro Onsen, the gateway to Shiretoko National Park, where we will be staying for the next two nights. Before leaving the hotel in Abashiri you will prepare your luggage to transfer to Lake Akan and will travel with an overnight bag only. You will prepare your overnight bag with enough items for 3 days and 2 nights. Breakfast at the ryokan and buffet dinner at the hotel included.

Travel: 2 Hours; Walking: Medium

## **Day 7 Shiretoko National Park - Oshinkoshin Waterfall, Shiretoko Peninsula Cruise; Shiretoko Goko Nature Walk**

Today we will explore the remote and beautiful Shiretoko National Park. Shiretoko is an ancient Ainu word meaning 'edge of the world'. Shiretoko National Park is famous in Japan for its beautiful scenery and abundant wildlife including deer, bear and foxes. In the morning, we will start with a quick stop at Oshinkoshin Waterfalls, included in the list of 100 Best Waterfalls in Japan. Next we will take a sightseeing cruise along the Shiretoko peninsula where we can see the dramatic and spectacular coastline with its tall cliffs and waterfalls and the mountains in the background. In the afternoon, we will take an easy 3km (2 mile) hike around the Shiretoko-go-ko area. (PLEASE NOTE: Depending on weather conditions, the boat cruise may be cancelled. The walk around Shiretoko Goko is flat, but the trails are not paved.) Buffet breakfast and buffet dinner at the hotel included.

**Travel: 1 Hour; Walking: Heavy**

## **Day 8 Travel to Lake Akan - Bihoro Pass, Wakoto Peninsula Walk, Ioan, Lake Masshu**

After breakfast, we will drive to Bihoro Pass where we will get an excellent view of the Akan National Park. From here you can see that this area is really a very large caldera with many smaller calderas located around it. Next, we will drive to the Wakoto Peninsula. The peninsula was an island at one time, but became a peninsula after sediment filled in the area between the island and the shore. We will take a one hour walk around the peninsula where you will be able to see nature and the small geothermal area on the peninsula.

Next we will drive to Ioan (Sulphur Mountain). After you arrive, you will see how it got its name. The inactive volcano here has numerous vents with steam and sulphur emitting from the vents.

Next we will travel to Lake Masshu, considered by many to be one of Japan's most beautiful lakes because of its clear, deep blue water. But the lake is shy, and is often shrouded by fog.

We will end the day by driving to Lake Akan, where we will be staying for the next two nights. Breakfast and dinner at the accommodations are included.

**Travel: 2 Hours 45 Minutes; Walking: Heavy**

## **Day 9 Free Day at Lake Akan**

Today is a free day to enjoy scenic Akan-ko. Take a sightseeing boat cruise around Akan-ko where you will stop to see Marimo, the unique globe-shaped algae that only grows in Lake Akan. Visit the Ainu Village with its many souvenir shops and restaurant selling authentic Ainu cuisine, and attend an authentic Ainu Dance Demonstration at the Ainu Village. Go hiking in the medieval forests surrounding the lake, or climb one of the nearby dormant volcanoes. Buffet breakfast and dinner at the ryokan included.

**Travel: N/A; Walking: TBD**

## **Day 9 Travel to Kushiro - Kushiro Crane Center, Kushiro Marsh Observatory**

After breakfast we will start at the Akan Crane Center. At one time, the cranes were thought to be extinct. But locals have brought them back from extinction. Next we will visit the Onnennai Visitor Center. Here we will get a chance to walk around the marsh, the summer home of the cranes. We will end the day with a visit to the Kushiro Marshland Observatory. From here, we will get a chance to walk through the forest for some excellent views of the surrounding marshland. After checking into our hotel, we will enjoy dinner at a seafood izakaya.

Breakfast at the accommodations and dinner at a local restaurant are included.

**Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Light**

## **Day 10 Travel to Noboribetsu Onsen**

After breakfast, we will drive to the Tokachi Shinmura Cream Terrace restaurant, operated by a local dairy farm. Here we will enjoy scones, clotted cream, milk jam, and milk tea (all locally made). We will then drive to Noboribetsu Onsen where we will be spending the night. Breakfast and dinner at the accommodations included.

**Travel: 5 Hours; Walking: Medium**

## **Day 11 Free Morning at Noboribetsu Onsen, Upopoy National Ainu Museum in the afternoon**

In the morning we will visit the Upopoy National Ainu Museum. In the afternoon you will have free time to enjoy the many hot springs or walk around the Jigokudani (Hell Valley) where you will find many steam vents and thermally heated pools and small geysers, including a natural thermally-heated mineral water footpath. Or just enjoy one of the 17 separate baths at the ryokan. In the afternoon we will visit the nearby Upopoy National Ainu Museum where we will learn more about and experience Ainu culture. Buffet-style breakfast and dinner at the ryokan included.

**Travel: 2 Hours; Walking: TBD**

## **Day 13 Travel to Hakodate; Hakodate - Goryokaku Fort**

We will start the day by driving to Hakodate. We will be making several stops along the way. In the afternoon, we will be stopping at the Goryokaku Fort, the first western-style fort built in Japan. In the evening, we will enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

**Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium**

### **Day 14 Hakodate - Hakodate Morning Market; Travel to Tokyo**

In the morning, we visit the Hakodate Morning Market, where the sellers can prepare the specialties of Hakodate (crab, sea urchin and squid) fresh from their stalls for breakfast. In the afternoon, we will board the new Hokkaido Shinkansen to return to Tokyo. In the evening, we will have our Sayonara dinner. Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at a local restaurant included.

**Travel: 5 1/2 Hours; Walking: Light**

### **Day 15 Return Home**

It is time to say Sayonara. You will meet the sending service in the lobby of the hotel, and they will help you board the appropriate transportation to the airport. Breakfast at the hotel included.

**Travel: 1 1/2 Hours; Walking: Light**

Walking level descriptions:

Light - 0 to 2 miles on level ground

Medium - 2 to 4 miles on level ground or 0 to 2 miles on hilly ground

Heavy - 4 to 6 miles on level ground or 2 to 4 miles on hilly ground



## **Dates & Pricing**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person)</b>	<b>Status</b>
Jul 6, 2025 - Jul 20, 2025	\$5,774.18/ \$896.10	Available
Sep 14, 2025 - Sep 28, 2025	\$5,974.00/ \$896.10	<b>Full</b>
Jul 5, 2026 - Jul 19, 2026	\$5,974.00/ \$896.10	Available
Oct 4, 2026 - Oct 18, 2026	\$6,216.05/ \$896.10	Available

### **Add-On Tours**

Our tours and tour itineraries are the best, but as the saying goes, “you can’t make everyone happy all of the time”. There may a specific destination or a specific experience you may want to include in your visit to Japan that may not be included your tour. Choose from our Add On tours to include your interests and make your Japan tour even better.

**Click [HERE](#) to view all of the Add-On Tours.**

**Or, use the arrows to scroll though the recommended list of Add-On Tours for this tour.**























## Inclusions

- Local, licensed, English-speaking, Japanese guides
- **Travel insurance from Travel Guard**, one of the world's largest travel insurance providers, will be provided to everyone from the United States. All others will receive a \$100 per person credit and will be responsible for obtaining their own travel insurance in their own home country. (The insurance provided by Samurai Tours will cover the land portion only. Insurance to cover airfare and other additional expenses is the tour member's responsibility.)
  - Exact coverage dependent on state
    - For residents of the following states please click here for your available plan. FL, KS, MN, MO, MT, NY, and WA
    - For all other states and the District of Columbia click here
  - **Travel Insurance Surcharge:** Depending on your age at the time the travel insurance is purchased, you may be subject to the following surcharge for your travel insurance. Travel insurance surcharges will be due at the same time as your tour deposits. (the surcharge itself is not insured)
    - Up to 69 - \$0
    - 70-74 - \$104
    - 75-79 - \$180
    - 80-84 - \$356
    - 85+ - \$545
  - **Travel Insurance Opt-Out:** If you would prefer to opt out of the travel insurance, please note this at the time of registration. You will receive a \$100 credit per person, which will be reflected on your invoice. In the event that you would need to cancel your tour, cancellation penalties may apply. See the Terms and Conditions page for the Cancellation Fees Schedule.
- Meeting service at Tokyo's Narita Airport or Tokyo's Haneda Airport and transfer to the hotel
  - The meeting service will meet you at the airport and provide you a transfer to the hotel near the airport
  - Meeting service can only be provided between 6am and 9pm. If you arrive at a time outside of these hours, we will need to provide alternative directions for you to get to the ryokan on your own.
- Sending service to the closest train station in Tokyo and transfer to Tokyo's Narita Airport or Tokyo's Haneda Airport
  - The sending service will escort you to the train station and make sure you board the correct train. The sending service will not accompany you to the airport.
- For those requiring meeting or sending services on other than the scheduled arrival/departure dates, there will be a \$100 fee for the meeting service from the airport into Tokyo or the sending service to the Tokyo train station.
- Lodging for 14 nights in Japanese-style ryokans or western-style hotels
- Meals:
  - Japanese-style or Western-style breakfast every morning (Please Note: Some ryokans offer Japanese breakfasts only.)
  - Two Japanese-style lunches
  - Eleven Japanese-style or Western-style Dinners
- All transportation costs when traveling with the group. (Transportation costs during scheduled free times are the tour member's responsibility)
- Electronic version of itinerary
- Admission fees to the destinations and activities listed in the Tour Highlights column on the right (Itinerary specifics subject to change.)
- Sayonara dinner at the end of the tour
- Baggage transfer from Tokyo to Abashiri
- Baggage transfer from Abashiri to Lake Akan

- Baggage transfer from Lake Akan to Noboribetsu
- Baggage transfer from Noboribetsu to Tokyo

Each tour member receives a tour handbook. This handbook is full of tips and suggestions taken from our Japan experiences that allow you to better plan and prepare for your trip, and therefore enjoy your trip even more. The tips and suggestions included cover everything from how to save while exchanging money, what to pack, some basic Japanese-language tips, general etiquette do's-and-don'ts, ryokan customs, etc.

## Exclusions

- Airfare is NOT included
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included
- A printed itinerary is not included

Thank you for downloading this PDF version of our tour. Please visit our website at [www.samuraitours.com/tours](http://www.samuraitours.com/tours) for the most current dates, prices and information.

## Contact Samurai Tours

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