

HOKKAIDO

HIKING, WILDLIFE & HOTSPRINGS ADVENTURE

DAY 1 ~ ARRIVE IN SAPPORO

Upon arrival at Sapporo New Chitose Airport, you'll be met and privately transferred to your hotel (approx. 1 hour).

Sapporo is the capital of the northern island of Hokkaido and is Japan's fifth largest city with a population of around two million. The city is unique in Japan with its spacious boulevards and open park space in stark contrast to the hemmed in districts of Tokyo. The city has an almost European vibe with a cafe culture more reminiscent of Paris or Milan than Japan. The Odorikoen Park, bisecting the city in two, is one of the best places for a stroll. The most photographed place in town is undoubtedly the clock tower. It was erected in 1878 as the drill hall for Sapporo Agricultural College. It is neither big, nor gorgeous, but its Western



architecture makes it strange enough for the Japanese to find it special. Another popular tourist destination is the Sapporo Beer Garden & Museum, which used to be the site of the first Sapporo Brewery, Japan's oldest, established in 1876. Sapporo Beer is one of Japan's most popular brands and you can learn all about the history and brewing of this delicious beer as well as taste the finished product.

JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo – Double room.

DAY 2 ~ DAY TRIP TO JOZANKEI

Today you have a free day to explore the city of Sapporo and nearby Jozankei Onsen. Located in Shikotsu-Toya National Park the hot springs town is a popular day trip from Sapporo. The area is easily reached by bus from Sapporo in 75 minutes.

JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo – Double Room (B)

DAY 3 ~ SAPPORO/BIEI

This morning you'll collect your rental vehicle and drive to the Furano/Biei region. Expansive fields of poppies and lavender announce that you've arrived in Biei, Hokkaido's heartland. Japanese photographer Shinzo Maeda was the first to spotlight the amazing colors of Biei's scenery with his work around the Tokachi area. The tiny town has bloomed ever since with artists' galleries, workshops and coffee houses. In winter, urban dwellers come for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, but during the summer cyclists ride the gentle hills and agricultural valleys, stopping for



panoramic views, whiffs of the abundant flora and to pick fruit at working farms along the way.

Explore the area at leisure.

Mori no Ryotei Biei – Twin use Honkan with Rotenburo (B, D)

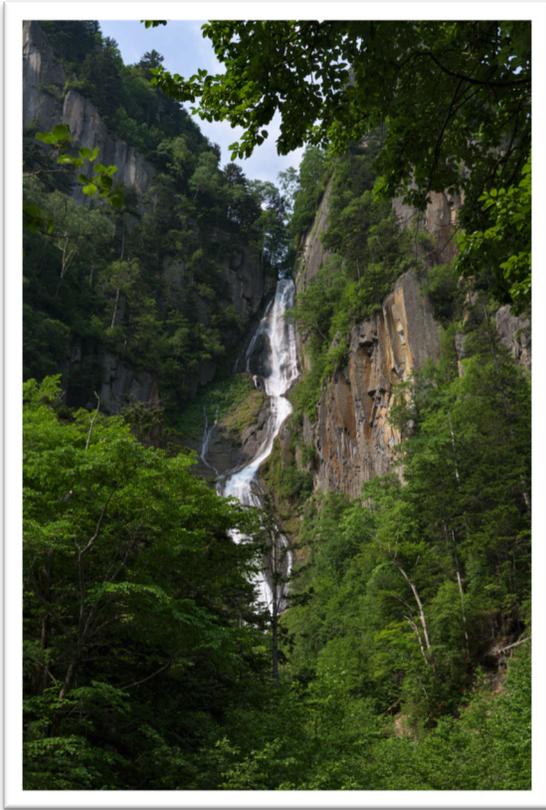
DAY 4 ~ FURANO/BIEI

Today you'll have the full day to relax and explore the scenic Furano, Biei Area. You may like to visit the famous Blue Pond, or shop at the Ningle Artisan Village. You can also drive to nearby Asahikawa, home to a zoo with a wide variety of northern wildlife with unique domes and windows that allow visitors a new perspective on the zoo's denizens.



Mori no Ryotei Biei – Twin use Honkan with Rotenburo (B, D)

DAY 5 ~ BIEI/SOUNKYO



(Japanese design) with bathroom (B, D)

This morning you'll drive to Sounkyo (around 2 hours – depending on traffic). You'll hook around the flanks of the volcanic Daisetsuzan National Park, through the city of Asahikawa. The little hot spring resort of Sounkyo Onsen sits at the foot of Mount Daisetsuzan on the northeast side of Daisetsuzan National Park. Sounkyo is also the name of a 12 mile gorge here, home to spectacular cliffs and dramatic waterfalls. This is a great base for hiking – or using the Sounkyo Ropeway which will bring you to within a 1-2 hour hike of the summit of Mount Kurodake. Sounkyo Onsen has an excellent visitor centre with hiking information and displays on local natural history.

Today you have the day to explore the gorgeous Sounkyo area. The Ginga No Taki and Ryusei no Taki waterfalls are quite close to the village, and the Kurodake Ropeway leads to great views and some excellent hiking.

Sounkyo Onsen Choyotei – Modern Room

DAY 6 ~ SOUNKYO/ABASHIRI

Today you'll be driving to Abashiri, via Monbetsu (for the Okhotsk Tokkari Seal Center) and past Lake Noto and Lake Abashiri. Overall time in the car should be about four hours, covering 147 miles.

Abashiri, the largest town on the Okhotsk Coast of northeastern Hokkaido, is predominantly a fishing town. In addition to an abundance of seasonal seafood available throughout the year, it is also blessed with natural beauty such as primeval flower gardens, lakes and in winter, the dramatic ice flows which extend far out into the Sea of Okhotsk.

However, when you say you will be visiting Abashiri to any Japanese they will immediately exclaim "Keimusho!" meaning prison. This is in reference to "Kangoku", the Meiji era penal facility built here to house serious offenders and political prisoners. Today the prison has been turned into an excellent museum where you can stroll through all the old buildings and even spend some time in a cell.

Mount Tendo in the suburbs is a great place from which to view Abashiri. In the Okhostk Ryuhyokan (Ice Flow Museum) you can see real ice flows even in the middle of summer, and experience a temperature of minus 15 degrees. You can also see a type of conch called a clione, whose back is plumed like a fairy tale angel, and is known as the "angel of the ice flows."

Hokuten no Oka – Twin – Tower Building Japanese Style Room (Lake View) (B, D)

DAY 7 ~ ABASHIRI/OTORU

This morning you'll drive to Utoro (1.5 hours). Utoro is a small town on the western shore of the Shiretoko Peninsula. The main harbour has the feel of a small fishing village, while an abundance of natural hot springs means there are some good onsen hotels here. Sightseeing boats run regular tours along the coastline to see the drift ice in winter or for bird watching in summer. In February the town hosts a nightly Fantastic laser show - a 20 minute recreation of the northern lights.

KIKI Shiretoko Natural Resort - Western Style Room (38sqm) (B, D)

DAY 8 ~ SHIRETOKO NATIONAL PARK

You'll have the day free to explore Shiretoko National Park. This park is prime bear country and has one of the highest brown bear densities in the world. The Five Lakes of Shiretoko area has high walkways that provide an easy vantage point even for novice wildlife watchers. There are also nature trails on the ground, with a 3km loop taking you through Shiretoko's primeval forest. During the time of year when the bears are active, you can enjoy guided tours through their habitat.



KIKI Shiretoko Natural Resort -

Western Style Room (38sqm) (B, D)

DAY 9 ~ UTORO/RAUSU/UTORO

This morning you'll drive to Rausu (40 minutes). The small town of Rausu is located on the Shiretoko Peninsula, one of the most remote areas of Japan. This small fishing port gives a fantastic taste of small town life in Japan - a million miles from the bright lights of Tokyo or

Sapporo! Winter time brings drift ice right up to the harbour and an ice breaker cruise is a fantastic way to see Stellar's Sea Eagles up close. The area is also known for the Stellar's Sea Eagle. Summer meanwhile makes this a great base for walks and hikes in the Shiretoko national park area.



You'll enjoy a two hour cruise around the Shiretoko Peninsula and the Sea of Okhotsk for a look at the rugged peninsula from the sea. The cruise also takes in the wildlife just off the peninsula with sightings of dolphins and various species of whale and rare birds. This is a good chance to appreciate the nature of this beautiful region.

After spending the day in Rausu, you'll head back to Utoro for the night.

KIKI Shiretoko Natural Resort - Western Style Room (38sqm) (B, D)

DAY 10-11 ~ UTORO/AKAN MASHU

This morning you'll drive to Kawayu Onsen (between Lake Mashu and Lake Kussharo) in Akan Mashu National Park, where you'll spend the next 2 nights. There is a lot to see and do in this



area. To start with you have the three crater lakes- Lake Akan, Lake Masshu and Lake Kussharo. Kussharo and Akan are both quite large and have access for light hiking, fishing, boating and hot springs. The crater at Lake Masshu is much more recent, so the lake surface itself isn't really accessible, but there are several observation points where you can look out over the vista and take some

excellent photos. Quite close to Kawayu Onsen is Mt. Iozan, aka Sulphur Mountain. This is an active volcano that has active Sulphur vents that you can walk around and up to. It's a really fascinating place. This is actually walking distance (2km) from the hotel. There are several Ainu (the indigenous people of Hokkaido) villages and museums in the area. Akan Kotan, is a well developed cluster of craft shops with a performance hall where you can view traditional Ainu dances.

You can also drive down to the Kushiro Marshes in an hour, and the Red Crowned Crane Center in an hour and 20 minutes so its still quite doable to visit the Kushiro sights.

DAY 12 ~ AKAN MASHU/UNKAI TERRACE/SAPPORO

Today you'll head back to Sapporo. If the weather looks good you may want to make an early start and visit the Unkai Terrace to see the sea of clouds rolling across the Tomamu mountains. The terrace is open between 5 and 7 am.

Afterwards, continue on to Sapporo (approx. 2 hours). Upon arrival you'll drop off your rental car. You'll have the remainder of the day free to relax and explore the city on your own.

JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo – Double Room (B)

DAY 13 ~ SAPPORO/DEPART

Today you'll be privately transferred to the New Chitose airport for your onward journey.

End of Trip

(Code: B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D - Dinner)

Land Cost: \$6,245 per person

Includes:

- 12 nights accommodation
- Breakfast daily & 7 dinners
- Private airport/hotel/airport transfers
- 9 days car rental
- Comprehensive tailor-made Info-Pack
- Full telephone support from English-speaking staff in our Japan office
- Full financial protection peace of mind
- All taxes and service charges

Excludes:

- Flights
- Travel insurance
- Meals other than those specified
- Gratuities if applicable
- Items of a personal nature
- Entrance fees to museums, parks, etc. unless otherwise stated