

Charms of Hokkaido Tour: Hokkaido Winter Festivals 2018 - 2/4

See the Sapporo Snow Festival, as well as four other main Winter Festivals in Hokkaido

Tour Code: GTG1373502

Tour Information

Land cost: from USD \$3198

Single supplement: USD \$640

Tour duration: 9 days 8 nights

Destination:

*Chitose / Shiraoi / Lake Shikotsu / Sapporo / Otaru /
 Asahikawa / Sounkyo / Abashiri / Lake Tofutsu / Akan
 National Park / Kushiro*

Tour cost includes:

- 5 nights Western style and 3 nights Japanese style accommodation
- Meet and greet upon arrival at Chitose Airport
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Private coach transfers between destinations in Japan
- Comprehensive escorted with AJT professional English speaking tour guide
- Gratuities

Meals

- Breakfast everyday
- 6 lunches and 4 dinners

Admission fees and activities

- All entry fees to sites, activities listed in the itinerary

Dates & Price

2018

Start Date	End Date	Twin / Triple	Start City	End City	Style	Status
Sun. Feb 4, 2018	Mon. Feb 12, 2018	USD \$3198.00	Sapporo	Kushiro	Deluxe	View Tour

Itinerary

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Day 1 Chitose Airport

Welcome to Sapporo! An AJT representative will meet you at the arrival gate and direct you to the hotel.

Hotel:

ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel Chitose or similar class

NOTE 1: The meet and greet is ONLY available for flights arriving after 11:00 AM.

Day 2 Shiraoi (Shiraoi Ainu Village), Lake Shikotsu (Lake Shikotsu Ice Festival), Sapporo (Sapporo Beer Museum)

Today we start our tour with a visit to the Ainu Village at Shiraoi, where you will learn about and meet the Ainu, the native people of northern Japan. Here you can enter their traditional thatch roof houses, watch a dance demonstration, listen to indigenous music, and sample prepared traditional smoked salmon that were hung from ceiling rafters. Then, we venture out to Lake Shikotsu, also known as, the Shikotsuko Hyoto Matsuri to see the lake's annual ice festival where snow sculptures, caves, and even buildings with 3 floors are made for people to walk around in for their amusement. In the afternoon, we will depart for Sapporo by a private coach and visit the Sapporo Beer Museum, dedicated to all things beer. Sapporo is Japan's oldest brewery and exports its beer throughout the world.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

ANA Hotel Sapporo or similar class

Day 3 Sapporo (Sapporo Snow Festival)

This morning we will visit the Sapporo Snow Festival (the Odori Site), the biggest snow festival in Hokkaido, by train. The festival's famous large snow sculptures are crafted by citizens who compete against each other's work of arts. It is normal for these snow figures to measure more than 25 meters wide and 15 meters high. Most are exhibited in the Odori site. Even so, many more snow sculptures of varied sizes and shapes are exhibited in events and concerts at other locations apart from the main stage in Odori's park. For those who want a view to remember, they can consider taking a view from the Sapporo TV Tower at the eastern end of Odori Park. The afternoon is free for you to enjoy, along with lunch on your own. Our tour guide will be there to help you make arrangements or take you to places depending on the group's need.

Meals:

Breakfast

Hotel:

ANA Hotel Sapporo or similar class

Day 4 Sapporo (Nijo Market / Mt. Okura Observatory / Historic Village of Hokkaido), Otaru (Glass Workshops / Music Box Museum / Otaru Snow Light Path)

This morning we continue to enjoy a tour of Sapporo at the Nijo Market where there are variety of fresh fruit, vegetables, and fish. Afterwards is a visit to Mt. Okura Observatory. The 90-meter ski jump portion of the Winter Olympics 1972 was held in the Okurayama Ski Jump Stadium. Taking a chair lift to the Okurayama Observatory at the top of the hill, then experiencing a breathtaking view of Sapporo's best views from above. From there, we go into the Historic Village of Hokkaido where horse-drawn carriages and trolleys are still seen and used. The village offers insight on its history and an open-air museum as well as through their buildings, which exemplify architectural evolution from the Meiji and Taisho eras into the modern age. From there, we travel into the romantic and nostalgic town known as Otaru. The warehouses that were once used for storage spaces are now stores, restaurants, and museums. Once there, we will go to the glass workshops and see the great designs and fine figures. Next, the Otaru Music Box Museum where a collection of music boxes of all shapes, sizes, and sounds are seen all around. Finally, we stroll around the Otaru Snow Light Path where candle lights illuminate the snowy surrounding, making the atmosphere a pleasant one for even the coldest of hearts.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

Grand Park Otaru Hotel or similar class

Day 5 Asahikawa (Asahikawa Winter Festival / Asahikawa Ramen Village / Otokoyama Sake Brewery), Sounkyo (Sounkyo Ice Fall Festival)

Today, we will take a 2-hour ride by private coach from Sapporo to Asahikawa for the Asahikawa Winter Festival. Once in Asahikawa, we will have lunch at the Asahikawa Ramen Village before heading to the Asahikawa Winter Festival. The biggest snow castle is found in the winter festival, entertaining all who come to visit it. The building may be cold, but you would always warm up with a nice cup of sake. Next, we visit the Otokoyama Sake Brewery where historical sake brewery tools are displayed and the history of Otokoyama sake was born. Enjoy a sake tasting experience to add to your experience. Then, we will proceed to Sounkyo Gorge in Daisetsuzan National Park. Lets enjoy the views of the Sounkyo Ice Fall Festival's snow creations that take shape in forms of creatures, cultural sites, and pop culture characters. After your evening stroll around the ice festival you can return to your hotel and relax in the hot spring baths.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

Sounkyo Choyotei Hotel or similar class

Day 6 Sounkyo (Ginga & Ryusei Waterfalls), Abashiri (Okhotsk Ryuhyo Museum / Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples)

After breakfast, we will explore the Sounkyo Gorge area including Ginga and Ryusei waterfalls, a popular ice climbing spot. From there, feast your eyes on enchanting scenery along the way to Abashiri. Then, we visit Okhotsk Ryuhyo Museum where you can learn about the surrounding environment and the cold temperatures that it can reach. The Sea of Okhotsk is frozen in winter, leaving plenty of drift ice from the Arctic waters. Your personal definition of cold temperatures and what it can really do will surely change after this activity. At the end of the day, we will visit the Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples, where we will learn of the indigenous people of Hokkaido, their culture, traditions, clothing, and nutrition.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

Abashiri Kanko Hotel or similar class

Day 7 Abashiri (Ice Breaker Cruise / Abashiri Prison Museum), Lake Tofutsu, Lake Akan (Wakasagi Smelt Fishing)

This morning, we will experience an Ice Breaker cruise among the floating drifts of ice. Once there, you will notice the different species that come to migrate or live in the area year-round. We will also visit Abashiri Prison Museum. The original Abashiri Prison was constructed in the 1890s, it was set to hold over a thousand dangerous criminals, but soon was overcapacitated and created unliveable conditions for its inmates. Ishii Teruo's films, however, created a Yakuza image in the 1960's that was more interesting for the public. Eventually, the prison's original buildings were moved and remodeled, then finished in 1985. It is now an open air museum, for the public. In the afternoon we will take a tour of Lake Tofutsu and Lake Akan. Once at Lake Akan, we will experience a local practice and delicacy, Wakasagi smelt fishing.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

New Akan Hotel or similar class

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Day 8 Akan National Park (Lake Akan Observatory / Akan International Crane Center), Kushiro (Kushiro City Marsh Observatory / Washo Market)

After breakfast we transfer to Akan National Park, known for its "red-crown" Tancho cranes and preserved park. Continuing from there we will visit Kushiro City Marsh Observatory and the Washo market. The Washo Market in Kushiro, Hokkaido is a market specializing in selling fish produce to the public. It is located close to the Kushiro Station within walking distance of the market. It is considered one of the top three markets to go to in Hokkaido.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel Kushiro or similar class

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Day 9 Tour End

After breakfast, our tour officially ends. Checkout time is 11 am and Kushiro Airport can be reached by Airport Limousine Bus.

Meals:
Breakfast

NOTE 2: If you would like to stay longer in Japan, please contact us to book hotel accommodations.