

Charms of Hokkaido: Cherry Blossom Tour 2018 - 4/28

Explore Southern & Central Hokkaido in spring while cherry blossoms are in full bloom

Tour Code: GTP2071347

Tour Information

Land cost: from USD \$3198

Single supplement: USD \$640

Tour duration: 9 days 8 nights

Destination:

*Shiraoi / Noboribetsu / Lake Toya / Hakodate /
 Matsumae / Shikabecho / Onuma Park / Niseko / Otaru
 / Asahikawa / Biei / Furano / Sapporo*

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
- 5 lunches and 5 dinners

Admission fees and activities

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

Dates & Price

2017

Start Date	End Date	Twin / Triple	Start City	End City	Style	Status
Wed. Apr 26, 2017	Thu. May 4, 2017	USD \$3198.00	Sapporo	Sapporo	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 (Ainu Village), Noboribetsu (Jigokudani), Lake Toya (Mt. Usu Ropeway)

Today we get the opportunity to learn about the Ainu, indigenous people of northern Japan, at the Shiraoi Ainu Village. There you will experience an authentic Ainu performance with music, dancing, and singing. In the afternoon, we will stop at Hokkaido's most famous hot spring resort, Noboribetsu Onsen. The valley generates 10,000 tons of bubbling water everyday, and visitors can walk to the nearby Oyunuma Lake and watch the plumes of steam rise. Then, we will drive past fields and mountains to Lake Toya. The lake is part of Shikotsu-Toya National park and is known for its beautiful nature and excellent hot spring. Lake Toya was listed as one of the top 100 beautiful landscapes of Japan in 2008. This is the 3rd largest caldera lake in Japan, about 42 km around, with 4 pretty islands, and is the habitat of many kinds of birds and deer. From there we will take the Usuzan Ropeway to the observation deck and take in the panoramic views of Lake Toya and neighboring Showa Shinzan. Tonight we will stay in a traditional Japanese style hotel offering hot spring baths with beautiful views of the lake.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

Toya Sun Palace or similar class

Day 3 Hakodate (Trappistine Convent / Fort Goryokaku / Red Brick Warehouses / Motomachi / Mt Hakodate Ropeway)

As we travel to Hakodate we will be stopping by the Trappistine Convent. It is the first convent in Japan that established in the 19th century. The red-brick contemplative convent was built in a solemn combination of Gothic and Romanesque styles reminiscent of old European castles. Fort Goryokaku is a star shaped fortress that was built for defensive purposes against international aggressions. The final battle of the Boshin War happened at fort and today it has been converted into a park with 1600 cherry blossoms planted around the grounds. The Kanemori Red Brick Warehouses are comprised of several buildings that were used to store goods during the golden age of foreign trade in Hakodate Port. Since then it has been converted into a shopping center. Motomachi was an area favored by foreigners to set up residency when Japan's self-imposed era of isolation ended. This means you can see many Westernized buildings. Then we will proceed up the Mount Hakodate ropeway. Mount Hakodate offers one of the best views from its summit at 334 meters high, overlooking both sea and land.

Meals:

Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel:

Yunokawa Prince Hotel Nagisatei or similar class

Day 4 Matsumae (Matsumae Castle / Matsumae Park - Matsumae Cherry Blossom Festival / Matsumaehan Yashiki)

In Matsumae we will be touring around Matsumae Castle and enjoying the Cherry Blossom Festival. Matsumae Castle once belonged to the powerful Matsumae Clan that ruled the region. It was a former castle town that thrived through trade, but after many years it was converted into a park. North of the castle there are over 10,000 cherry blossoms planted in rows across the area. You can see over 250 varieties of the flower throughout the park, which is why the blooming period in the area lasts for a month. During the festival there will be performances, food stalls, and special events for visitors to enjoy. At the western edge of Matsumae Park is a small historical theme park called Matsumaehan Yashiki. It recreates Matsumae Town during the Edo Period, which includes a guard station, merchant houses, magistrate's office and shipping agent.

Meals:

Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel:

Yunokawa Prince Hotel Nagisatei or similar class

Day 5 Hakodate (Morning Market), Shikabecho (Home Cooking Class), Onuma Park, Niseko (Glass Art Experience)

In the morning we will be going to the Hakodate Morning Market. It has over 450 shops and was established after World War II. This morning market is the third largest in Hokkaido. Then we will be heading to Shikabecho to experience making home cooked meals from freshly caught seafood. Then we will be traveling to Onuma Park. In Lake Onuma and Lake Konuma there are 126 islets and can be reached by boat. However, there are 18 bridges connecting to a select few islets allowing travelers the opportunity of reaching the small pieces of land by foot. Onuma Park was voted as one of the New Three Views of Japan. Afterwards we will head to Niseko to participate in a glass art workshop. You will have a chance to sand blast a design into a piece of glass and bring it home as a souvenir.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

Hilton Niseko Village or similar class

Day 6 Otaru (Otaru Cannal / Glass Workshops / Music Box Museum), Asahikawa (Otokoyama Sake Brewery)

In the morning we will travel to Otaru, renowned for its canals and glassblowing. During the first half of the 20th century, the Otaru Canal was a vital part of the city's busy harbor. The canal allowed large vessels to be unloaded onto smaller ones, then transported to the local warehouses. Although the canal became obsolete when modern dock facilities allowed for direct unloading from the large vessels, it still remains an integral part of the city's history and culture. As part of a citizen's movement in the 1980s, the canal was beautifully restored and former warehouses were transformed into cafes, restaurants, museums, and shops. Next, we will visit glass workshops and the Music Box Museum. In the afternoon, we will proceed to Asahikawa to visit Otokoyama Sake Brewery. Otokoyama is Asahikawa's most famous sake, both within Japan and worldwide. The spacious complex offers plenty to occupy the senses including a front seat view of the sake making process. Aside from being a sake museum there is a beautiful Japanese garden. It is filled with flowers from May to September with a garden-side shaded rest area to unwind, as well as a delightful sake tasting room and gift shop.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

Asahikawa Grand Hotel or similar class

Day 7 Biei (Blue Pond), Furano (Cheese Factory / Furano Winery), Sapporo (Clock Tower / Odori Park / Susukino)

On a private coach, we will travel to Furano. Furano is celebrated for its local wine. Located on a hill overlooking the city, the Furano Winery is open to the public and there are free wine tastings. You can see how local camembert cheese is made at the Furano Cheese Factory. Sample the black cheese, which gets its color from squid ink, as well as a number of other cheeses at the factory shop. Don't forget to visit the ice cream factory and pizzeria, or participate in one of the many hands-on workshops. In the afternoon, we will proceed to Biei, a small town surrounded by a picturesque landscape of gently rolling hills and vast fields. We will pay a visit to the mystic man made Blue Pond. This pond is blue because of the aluminum hydroxide. The Blue Pond changes colors depending on the weather. For example, in spring it turns into spectacularly green color. The artificial pond was created as a part of erosion control system that was built to prevent Biei in case of an eruption of Mount Tokachidake. In the afternoon, we will visit Sapporo and spend two nights there. The tour includes a visit to the Sapporo Clock Tower and Odori Park, where you can stroll along the promenade and enjoy the scent of the summer blooms. The next stop is Susukino, Hokkaido's largest entertainment district. The evening will be open for you to enjoy your free time.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

ANA Hotel Sapporo or similar class

Day 8 Sapporo (Nijo Market / Okurayama Ski Jump / Sapporo Beer Museum / Historic Village / Shiroi Koibito Park)

This morning our tour of Sapporo continues with a visit to the Nijo Market, where you will see a variety of fresh, local fruits and vegetables. Next is a visit to the Okurayama Ski Jump where the 90 meter ski jump portion of the 1972 Winter Olympics was held. From there we will visit the Sapporo Beer Museum, dedicated to all things beer. Sapporo is Japan's oldest brewery and exports its beer throughout the world. At the Historic Village, you can view architecture from the Meiji and Taisho periods when Japan experienced rapid expansion. Then visit Shiroi Koibito Park, a theme park founded by a local chocolate company. Its famous Shiroi Koibito cookies are buttery cookies with a white chocolate center. They are a popular favorite with the locals and tourists alike.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

ANA Hotel Sapporo or similar class

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Day 9 Tour End

After breakfast, our tour officially ends. Checkout time is 11 am and Chitose 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.