

Charms of Northern Japan Tour (Reverse): Cherry Blossoms & Wisteria 2017 - 4/29

The must see sights of Tohoku & Hokkaido...plus cherry blossoms & wisteria in Spring

Tour Code: GTR1898545

Tour Information

Land cost: from USD \$3298

Single supplement: USD \$640

Tour duration: 9 days 8 nights

Destination:

*Ashikaga / Nikko / Matsushima / Hiraizumi / Morioka /
 Towada / Aomori / Seikan Tunnel / Hakodate / Lake
 Toya / Noboribetsu / Shiraoi / Otaru / Sapporo*

Tour cost includes:

- 5 nights Western style and 3 nights Japanese style accommodation
- Meet and greet upon arrival at Narita 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

2017

Start Date	End Date	Twin / Triple	Start City	End City	Style	Status
Sat. Apr 29, 2017	Sun. May 7, 2017	USD \$3298.00	Tokyo	Sapporo	Deluxe	View Tour

2018

Start Date	End Date	Twin / Triple	Start City	End City	Style	Status
Sat. Apr 28, 2018	Sun. May 6, 2018	USD \$3298.00	Tokyo	Sapporo	Deluxe	View Tour

Itinerary

Tour Code: GTR1898545

Day 1 Narita Airport

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

Hotel:

Tobu Hotel Levant Tokyo or similar class

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

NOTE 2: If you wish to stay extra nights before the tour starts, please contact us to book hotel accommodations.

Day 2 Tochigi (Ashikaga Flower Park), Nikko (Lake Chuzenji / Kegon Waterfall / Toshogu Shrine)

Today we will first visit the Ashikaga Flower Park in the Tochigi Prefecture. There, you will find the Great Wisteria Tree of more than 150 years of age, which is designated as a Natural Monument in Tochigi. Not only will you be shaded by the Great Wisteria Tree, but as you venture through the park the different colored wisteria will decorate your walk from above. Below the various flowers, like azaleas, will complement the hanging wisteria throughout the Ashikaga Flower Park. Afterwards, we travel overland to Nikko National Park in the mountains north of Tokyo and discover this lovely region. The Japanese have a saying: "Don't say kekko (wonderful) without seeing Nikko." The shrines and temples of Nikko, together with their natural surroundings, have for centuries been closely associated with the history of the Tokugawa Shoguns. Visit Lake Chuzenji and Kegon Waterfall. The almost 100 meter tall Kegon Waterfall is the most famous of Nikko's many beautiful waterfalls. In fact, it is even ranked as one of Japan's three most beautiful falls, along with Nachi Waterfall in Wakayama Prefecture and Fukuroda Waterfall in Ibaraki Prefecture. Next is a visit to the lavishly decorated Toshogu Shrine set in a grove of magnificent ancient Japanese cedars. Tonight, we will stay in the Onsen Ryokan at Kinugawa Onsen, where you can soak in the therapeutic waters of a spa bath and feast on a traditional Japanese Kaiseki banquet dinner.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

Kinugawa Onsen Hotel or similar class

Day 3 Matsushima (Matsushima Cruise / Godaido / Zuiganji Temple)

After a Japanese breakfast at the ryokan, you will be visiting Matsushima, a picturesque bay full of pine tree covered small islands, where we explore ancient caves once frequented by meditating monks. Matsushima is famous for being one of Japan's three most scenic views alongside Miyajima and Amanohashidate. The bay is dotted by over 200 small islands covered by pine trees. We will take the best way to view the islands by boarding one of the sightseeing boat. We will then visit Godaido and Zuiganji Temple, the most famous in the Tohoku region, was built by Date Masamune and is designated as a national treasure.

Meals:

Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel:

Hotel Matsushima Taikanso or similar class

Day 4 Hiraizumi (Chusonji Temple), Morioka (Morioka Handi - Works Square)

This morning, we will head to Hiraizumi for a cultural interlude and to stroll around the magnificent Japanese Cedar Trees and photogenic buildings at Chusonji Temple. Hiraizumi is now listed as a World Heritage site and is home to Konjiki-do (Golden Hall) within Chusonji Temple, which attempts to recreate an ideal Buddhism world. As such, it is host to an ensemble of exquisite "culture of gold" remnants from the brand of Buddhism that developed independently in the Tohoku region far away from the cultural center of Kyoto in the late Heian era of the 11th century. UNESCO has recognized this area as being a globally rare example of local culture to manifest on such a high level in the transitional period from the ancient era to the medieval period. Then, we proceed to Morioka for a visit to the Morioka Handi-Works Square, a facility where you can "see, touch, and create" various traditional craftworks and foods of Morioka.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

Towadako Lake View Hotel or similar class

Day 5 Towada (Lake Towada / Oirase Gorge), Aomori (Nebuta Warasse), Undersea Train from Aomori to Hakodate (Mt Hakodate Ropeway)

Today, we will visit Japan's third deepest lake - Lake Towada, a volcanic crater lake 44 km in circumference. We will have a nature walk along the creek through Oirase Gorge. Over a dozen waterfalls cascade down into the stream all along its length from the walls of the gorge. The stream flows along the floor of the Oirase Gorge, winding among trees which are lush green in spring and summer and turn brilliant shades of red, yellow and orange from late October through early November. Then visit the Nebuta Warasse, a well done museum about the Nebuta Matsuri in Aomori. In the afternoon, we will travel across the Tsugaru Channel between the islands of Hokkaido and Honshu by train via the undersea train tunnel, before arriving to Hakodate. It is a small city that has some of the most authentic and best preserved historic buildings in Japan. Upon arrival in Hakodate, we will take a tram and ropeway ride up to Mt Hakodate from where we can look down upon the twinkling lights that surround Hakodate Bay. The views from the mountain are spectacular and included among Japan's three best night views alongside the views from Nagasaki's Mount Inasa and Kobe's Mount Rokko.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

Loisir Hotel Hakodate or similar class

Day 6 Hakodate (Hakodate Morning Market / Fort Goryokaku), Onuma Park, Lake Toya (Usuzan Ropeway)

Today we will continue our tour in Hakodate. Hakodate was one of the first Treaty Ports in Japan which opened up to world trade in 1854, so there are many preserved buildings around the area from that time. First is a visit to the famous morning market, where you will see a variety of fresh seafoods, local fruits and vegetables. Then visit the Goryokaku Pentagonal Fort, built in 1868 and the only structure of its kind in Japan. The surrounding moat and defensive grounds are now a city park and gardens. From Hakodate, we head to Lake Toya, along the way we stop at the Lake Onuma. In Lake Toya, we will take the Usuzan Ropeway to the observation deck and have a panoramic views of Lake Toya and neighboring Showa Shinzan. Tonight we will stay in Noboribetsu where we will have dinner in the hotel.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

Noboribetsu Manseikaku or similar class

Day 7 Noboribetsu (Jigokudani), Shiraoi (Ainu Village), Sapporo (Clock Tower / Odori Park / Susukino)

In the morning, we will visit the Jigokudani. 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. Today we will have the opportunity to learn about the Ainu, the indigenous people of northern Japan. At the Shiraoi Ainu Village, you will experience an authentic Ainu performance with music, dancing, and singing. In the afternoon, we proceed to Sapporo city. The tour includes a visit to the Sapporo Clock Tower and Odori Park, where you can stroll along the promenade. The next stop is Susukino, Hokkaido's largest entertainment district. In the evening is for you to enjoy your free time.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

ANA Hotel Sapporo or similar class

Day 8 Sapporo (Historic Village / Sapporo Beer Museum), Otaru (Otaru Canal / Sakaimachi Street - Kitaichi Garasukan - Otaru Music Box Museum)

In the morning our tour of Sapporo continues with a visit to the Historic Village, you can view architecture from the Meiji and Taisho periods when Japan experienced rapid expansion. 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. Then, 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 local warehouses. Although the canal became obsolete when modern dock facilities allowed for the direct unloading of large vessels, the canal 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 have been transformed into cafes, restaurants, museums, and shops. Next, we will visit glass workshops and Music Box Museum in Sakaimachi Street.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel Chitose or similar class

Itinerary

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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 hotel shuttle bus.

Meals:
Breakfast