

Charms of Hokkaido Tour: Takinoue Park Shibazakura Festival 2017 - 5/22

Explore Hokkaido in spring shibazakura season; featuring Natural World Heritage sites, nature, gourmet, culture, and rural villages

Tour Code: GTT2159263

Tour Information

Land cost: from USD \$3098

Single supplement: USD \$640

Tour duration: 9 days 8 nights

Destination:

Shiraoi / Noboribetsu / Lake Toya / Kutchan / Otaru / Sapporo / Furano / Biei / Sounkyo / Takinoue / Abashiri / Shiretoko / Lake Mashu / Kushiro

Tour cost includes:

- 6 nights Western style and 2 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

2017

Start Date	End Date	Twin / Triple	Start City	End City	Style	Status
Mon. May 22, 2017	Tue. May 30, 2017	USD \$3098.00	Sapporo	Kushiro	Deluxe	View Tour

2018

Start Date	End Date	Twin / Triple	Start City	End City	Style	Status
Mon. May 21, 2018	Tue. May 29, 2018	USD \$3098.00	Sapporo	Kushiro	Deluxe	View Tour

Itinerary

Tour Code: GTT2159263

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), Noboribetsu (Jigokudani)

Today we get 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 will stop at Hokkaido's most famous hot spring resort, Noboribetsu Onsen. The valley generates 10,000 tons of bubbling water every day, 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 for dinner and overnight accommodations. Lake Toya is part of Shikotsu-Toya National park, known for its beauty of nature and good hot spring, and was chosen for 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. 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

Itinerary

Tour Code: GTT2159263

Day 3 Lake Toya (Lake Toya Boat Ride / Usuzan Ropeway / Showa Shinzan), Kutchan (Shibazakura Garden of Kazuo Mishima)

After breakfast, we will take a 30 minute cruise to Nakanoshima Island, an island in the middle of the Lake Toya where you can stroll around the island and get acquainted to the local creatures. Then, head to Mt. Usu and take the Usuzan Ropeway to the observation deck and take in the panoramic views of Lake Toya and neighboring Showa Shinzan. Afterwards we will head to the Shibazakura (moss phlox) Garden of Kazuo Mishima in Kutchan. The field is 400 square meters big and has a mound made to look like Mount Yotei.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

ANA Hotel Sapporo or similar class

Day 4 Otaru (Otaru Cannal / Glass Workshops / Music Box Museum), Sapporo (Clock Tower / Odori Park / Susukino)

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 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 the afternoon, we will visit Sapporo. The tour includes a visit to the Sapporo Clock Tower and Odori Park, where you can stroll along the promenade and sniff the spring blooms. The next stop is Susukino, Hokkaido's largest entertainment district. This evening is for you to enjoy your free time.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

ANA Hotel Sapporo or similar class

Itinerary

Tour Code: GTT2159263

Day 5 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, buttery cookies with a white chocolate center, are a favorite with locals and tourists alike.

Meals:

Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel:

ANA Hotel Sapporo or similar class

Day 6 Furano (Cheese Factory / Furano Winery / Tomita Farm - Furano Flower Fields), Biei (Blue Pond), Sounkyo (Ginga & Ryusei Waterfalls)

On a private coach, we will travel to Furano. One of the best spots to see the beautiful flowers against the Tokachi Mountains is Farm Tomita. In addition to flowers, 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, and 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. Visit Blue Pond, and then enjoy the beautiful landscapes of Panorama Road from the window. The Ginga and Ryusei Waterfalls are located in the Sounkyo Gorge about 3 kilometers away from the Obako valley. They are a pair of waterfalls that is divided by a huge rock formation protruding from the cliff.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

Sounkyo Choyotei Hotel or similar class

Day 7 Takinoue (Takinoue Koen Park), Abashiri (Abashiri Prison Museum / Okhotsuku Ryu-hyo Museum)

Today we will be going to Takinoue Park, which is known for its shibazakura (pink moss phlox). The abundant pink moss phlox covers 100,000 square meters of a hillside. While there we will have the chance to enjoy the Shibazakura Festival happening around the blooming period. Next we will enjoy the beautiful scenery as we drive to Abashiri and visit Abashiri Prison Museum. Abashiri Prison was constructed in the 1890s to hold more than one thousand dangerous criminals. The prison gained national fame through a popular yakuza movie series by director Ishii Teruo in the 1960s. Following a major modernization of the Abashiri Prison in 1984, the prison's old buildings were moved into the Abashiri Prison Museum, which opened its doors to the public in 1985 as an open air museum. Next, visit Abashiri Drift Ice Museum, where we meet the curator and discover how the sea freezes here in winter. Stay at Shiretoko tonight and enjoy dinner at the hotel.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Hotel:

Shiretoko Grand Hotel "Kita Kobushi" or similar class

Day 8 Shiretoko (Shiretoko Nature Cruise), Lake Mashu, Kushiro (Akan International Crane Center / Kushiro Marshlands)

After breakfast discover nature treasures within Japan's newest World Heritage listed site, Shiretoko Peninsula, a mountainous wilderness protruding into the Sea of Okhotsk. We will take a small boat and cruise close to Shiretoko's sheer rocky cliffs and observe colonies of sea birds and brown bears. Then, we transfer to Lake Mashu where you can look down into the volcanic crater lake. Continue our journey to visit the Akan International Crane Center, a museum and breeding center and sanctuary for Tancho "Red-crowned" Cranes. Lastly, visit Kushiro Marshlands, the largest wetland in Japan, protected by the Ramsar Convention in 1980 and incorporated in the Kushiro Shitsugen National Park in 1987.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel Kushiro or similar class

Itinerary

Tour Code: GTT2159263

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.