

## Highlights of Hokkaido



*The Blue Pond of Biei*

### **Your Japan trip at a glance**

*Once the frontier of Japan, the spirit of pioneering still remains in Hokkaido and its people. The island offers a more rustic experience than bustling mainland Japan. Considered by some to be the most beautiful place in Asia, this itinerary allows you to see this beauty for yourself. You will begin your journey in the buzzing metropolis of Tokyo before moving to Japan Northernmost island. You will spend a few days in the lovely Hakodate, well known for its delicious food and Mount Hakodate. Move on to Lake Toya, part of the Shikotsu-Toya National Park. Whilst here enjoy hiking Mount Usu as well a relaxing time at Toyako hot springs. Before heading back to Japan mainland, you will head to Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido which offers plenty of activities and food specialities.*

## Tokyo

Home to over 12 million people, the vast metropolis of Japan's capital must be seen to be believed. Tokyo embraces the modern and ancient like no other city on earth and offers something for everyone who wants to delve into the Japanese phenomenon: the towering skyscrapers and frenzied neon of Shinjuku, the pop culture and gadget paradise of Akihabara, the sophisticated chic of Ginza, the biggest and liveliest fish market in the world, the old downtown area of Asakusa, and the tranquil, understated beauty of Meiji Shrine. Not to mention superb restaurants and great bars as well as fabulous shopping and museums befitting the capital of the world's second-largest economy.



## Hakodate

The third largest city after Sapporo and Asahikawa, Hakodate was the first Japanese city to be opened to foreign trade in 1854. This long standing overseas presence is most evident in the Motomachi district, which includes an elaborate Russian Orthodox Church, as well as the ornate British Consulate building, and the old Public Hall. The city is also home to "Goryokaku", a western style fort, which Samurai rebels took control of, forming the short lived Ezo Republic in 1869. Hakodate's focal point is its mountain, and the night-time view of the city from the summit is an absolute must for any visitor. *Lucky Pierrot* restaurants dot the city, and are a Hakodate exclusive to boot, with each one having its own unique theme. Any foodie worth their salt should try their luck at finishing the gigantic "futucho" burger.

## Lake Toya

The site of the 2008 G8 Summit, the Lake Toya area offers wonderful hikes on Mount Usu, an active volcano with its last eruption in 2000. The craters that formed from this recent eruption are a sight to behold. Mount Usu has a younger sibling, "Showa Shinzan". Named for the Showa Emperor, it is a real baby in mountain terms, having only formed properly as a result of a series of earthquakes between 1943-1945. The peaceful Toyako onsen offers hikers opportunity for a well-earned spot of rest and relaxation.





### **Sapporo**

Japan's fifth largest city and capital of Hokkaido Prefecture, Sapporo has an attitude which befits a city of this status. In June, the city's central area, Odori Park, hosts the Yosakoi Dancing Festival. Attracting no less than 30,000 participants, including amateurs as well as professionals from as far afield as Taiwan, Yosakoi is a true spectacle with vibrant costumes and unbelievable precision. Throughout the summer, Odori Park is the location of the Sapporo beer festival, and a Sapporo Beer is a perfect way to enjoy a pleasant evening. Experience a lovely nightview from the city station's JR Tower, and learn of frontier Hokkaido at the Hokkaido open air museum.

### **Furano and Biei**

The Aoi Ike or "Blue Pond" of Biei and Lavender Farm Tomita of Furano are definitive testaments to the timeless beauty of the island of Hokkaido. The former is a tranquil piece of scenery with the water being a majestic blue, whilst the sights and smells of Farm Tomita's lavender is a deeply profound experience.



## **ITINERARY**

### **Day 1: Arrive in Tokyo**

Welcome to Japan! Our friendly Meet & Greet service representative will be waiting in the Arrivals lobby and holding a sign with your name on. The Meet & Greet will direct you to the Narita Express train or limousine bus bound for Tokyo. Check in to your clean and comfortable Tokyo hotel for 2 nights.

### **Day 2: Tokyo**

Your options are unlimited in this incredible city. Explore Tokyo's past in the bustling, traditional Asakusa district, visit the world's largest fish market at Tsukiji, shop in the fashionable districts of Shibuya and Harajuku and dine on Japan's finest cuisine. Tokyo is relatively straightforward to navigate, and our Information Pack will make travelling around the city a breeze.

*Optional guided excursion*

Enjoy a full day of sightseeing by coach in Tokyo, with lunch included. Your guide will show you the highlights of this vast metropolis, from the Imperial Palace and serene Meiji Shrine to the 'Electric City' of Akihabara.

### **Day 3: Tokyo to Hakodate**

Fly from Tokyo to Hakodate (flights to be arranged by you). Check in in a superbly furnished hotel for 3 nights. As the sun sets, enjoy a cable car ride up to the top of Mount Hakodate (can also be hiked), and take in the spectacular night view of the city.

### **Day 4: Hakodate**

Take in all that lovely Hakodate has to offer. Start your day with a visit to the lively seafood market. Then travel to the Goryokaku Star Fort, and be sure to see the view from the top of Goryokaku Tower. Enjoy a delicious burger or curry in one of the many *Lucky Pierrot* restaurants (a Hakodate exclusive) for lunch. In the afternoon, explore the streets of Motomachi District. Being the first Japanese city to open to trade from overseas, fine architecture from across the globe can be found here, a particularly prominent spectacle is the Russian Orthodox Church.



### **Day 5: Trip to Onuma National Park.**

Take a 30 minute train ride from Hakodate to Onuma National Park. When you first arrive, you will be greeted with the majestic sight of Mount Komagatake. You may wish to rent a bicycle and enjoy the various lakes that dot the area.

### **Day 6: Travel from Hakodate to Lake Toya**

**Start using your JR Hokkaido 4 day Flexi Pass \* (which does *not* have to be used on consecutive days)**

Visit the red buildings of the harbour district, then in late afternoon, travel by train to Lake Toya, where you will stay for 3 nights.

### **Day 7: Lake Toya**

Spend the day exploring the area around Lake Toya. In the morning, enjoy a boat ride to Nakajima Island at the lake's centre. Later on, take the ropeway up Mount Usu, an active volcano which last erupted in 2000. Pay a visit to Showa Shinzen, one of the youngest in the world.



### **Day 8: Whale watching in Muroran \***

Enjoy a short journey from Toya Station to Muroran, and spend the day watching whales and dolphins, in recent years, large groups of orcas have also been spotted and are a sight to behold.

### **Day 9: Lake Toya to Sapporo \***

Enjoy one last morning in Lake Toya, and take the train to Sapporo in the afternoon. Enjoy a beer at the Sapporo Beer Festival, and marvel at the view from Sapporo Station's JR Tower. Check in to your centrally located hotel for 4 nights.

### **Day 10: Sapporo - *The Sapporo Beer Festival is held throughout August***

Spend the day exploring Sapporo. Enjoy a morning hike up Mount Moiwa, and enjoy an excellent view of the city. Travel to the Historical Village of Hokkaido, an open air museum that depicts life during the frontier settlement of the prefecture. Visit the Sapporo Beer Factory, and experience for yourself the making of what is considered by some to be the best beer in Japan. Eat your fill of soup curry, a native Hokkaido dish, at one of the city's fine restaurants.



### **Day 11: Day trip to Otaru**

Take an express train and spend the day in Otaru, a small coastal town 1 hour northwest of Sapporo. Stroll along the town's canal area, and explore Sakaimachi Streets; with shops that sell all sorts of local souvenirs and cuisine.

### **Day 12: Day trip to Furano and Biei - *The Furano Lavender flowering season is from June to August\****

Today you might enjoy a day trip to the scenic areas of Furano and Biei. Take in wonderful display and aroma of the purple lavender at Farm Tomita. See the majesty of "Aoiike" or the "Blue Pond". You could also visit the Furano Winery (a working winery) as well as the Furano Cheese Factory where you can observe its production process and join hands-on workshops. Upon your return to Sapporo, you may want to enjoy an evening meal of "Genghis Khan" (pronounced jingisukan), another Hokkaido delicacy consisting of barbecued lamb, at the Sapporo Bier Garten restaurant.

### **Day 13: Sapporo to Tokyo**

Sayonara, Hokkaido! Return to Tokyo by plane from Sapporo (to be arranged by you). Enjoy your final night in the capital.

### **Day 14: Tokyo**

Transfer from your hotel to Narita International Airport (Tokyo).

**\*** = Days we suggest you use your JR Hokkaido 4 Day Flexi Pass (which does not have to be used on consecutive days)

#### PRICE INCLUDES:

- 13 nights' hotel accommodation in a Double/Twin room on a bed and breakfast basis (**for the 3\* option**)  
**OR:**
- 10 nights' hotel accommodation in a Double/Twin room on a bed and breakfast basis & 3 nights' ryokan accommodation in a Japanese style room on a bed, **dinner** and breakfast basis (**for the 4\* option**)
- Meet & Greet service on arrival at Tokyo
- JR Hokkaido 4 Day Flexi Rail Pass
- Transfer from/to the airport for your international arrival/departure
- Detailed Japan Journeys Information Pack including detailed train schedules, maps, & brochures
- Personalised Japan Journeys App to help manage your documents
- All Japanese sales taxes and service charge
- Full financial protection via Japan Journeys' membership of the Travel Trust Association through which your monies are held in a Trust Account until you return home (under Membership No. U3078), see: <http://www.traveltrust.co.uk>

#### NOT INCLUDED IN PRICE:

- International airfare
- Domestic flights to and from Hokkaido (10,000 JPY, i.e. approx. £75.00 per sector utilising a JAL *Yokoso* Pass)
- Meals not mentioned above
- Entrance fees
- Return train journey from Hakodate to Onuma National Park (1,080 JPY per person)
- Train fares (other than the days using your JR Hokkaido 4Day Flexi Pass)
- Boat ride to Nakajima Island (Approx. 1,500 JPY per person)
- Taxi, subway and tramway fees
- Travel insurance

#### PRICE:

3\* Hotels from **£2,125.00** per person based on Twin/Double room occupancy.

4\* Hotels/ryokan from **£2,675.00** per person based on Twin/Double room occupancy.

3\* Single room supplement: from **£250.00**

4\* Single room supplement: from **£600.00**

**Optional guided excursions in Tokyo:** £101.00 full day, including lunch

*All price estimates are based on current rates of exchange and are subject to availability.*

To make a booking, a deposit of **£200.00** per person is required. The balance of the price of the trip must be made 12 weeks prior to departure.

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