



SAMURAI TOURS

Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan

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Northern Tohoku and Western Hokkaido Winter Mini Tour

8 Days/7 Nights

Northern Tohoku and Western Hokkaido Winter Mini Tour



Tour Overview

Tohoku is the northern part of Honshu, the main island of the Japanese archipelago. Tohoku is known as a remote and scenic region, and for its numerous traditional onsens, and welcoming and friendly people. You will end up on Japan's northernmost island, Hokkaido. Among the Japanese, Hokkaido has become synonymous with sensational food, stunning scenery and some of the best onsens in Japan.

Destinations

Tokyo, Zao Onsen, Nyuto Onsen, Kakunodate, Akita, Aomori, Hakodate, Noboribetsu Onsen, Sapporo

Tour Factors



Cultural Immersion



Pace



Physical Activity



Tour Details

Northern Tokoku and Western Hokkaido are rich in history and traditional Japanese culture. Touring these areas in the wintertime gives you the opportunity to really experience this history and culture. Smaller crowds, world famous onsens, warm sake, and savory foods will enrich your experiences. In Zao Onsen you will have the opportunity to participate in winter sports and see the famous “snow monsters” both during the day and lit up at night. Relax in the hot springs at traditional Nyuto Onsen, and travel to the former castle town of Kakunodate. Journey along the Japan Sea coast on the Resort Shirakami before arriving at Hakadote where you will be amazed by its enchanting night view, all before arriving at Noboribetsu Onsen with its world famous hot springs. The tour will end in Sapporo, the largest city on Hokkaido and the host of the 1972 Winter Olympics. Or, if you would prefer, you can fly to Tokyo instead.

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Zao Onsen "Snow Monsters"
- ✓ Nyuto Onsen
- ✓ Train Cruise including Tsugaru Shamisen performance
- ✓ Noboribetsu Onsen

Tour Inclusions








- ✓ Travel Guard Gold Policy (for American tour members only)
- ✓ Reserved Seat Train Tickets on all travel between cities
- ✓ Baggage transfer from city to city
- ✓ Two Separate Rides on the Shinkansen
- ✓ Electronic version of Tour Handbook and Japanese History

Tour Exclusions

- ✗ International airfare is NOT included.
- ✗ A printed itinerary is not included
- ✗ Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included



Tour Destinations

-  Tokyo
-  Zao Onsen
-  Kakunodate
-  Akita
-  Aomori
-  Hakodate
-  Noboribetsu Onsen

Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in Tokyo

You will be staying overnight in the city of Tokyo. You will travel on your own to Tokyo and check into the hotel. We will leave a message for you at the hotel informing you of the meeting time for the next day. No meals included.

TBD; Walking: TBD

Day 2 Travel to Zao Onsen; Zao Onsen "Snow Monster" Light-up

Before leaving Tokyo, you will need to prepare your luggage to transfer to Zao Onsen. We will be traveling to Zao Onsen with an overnight bag only. Please prepare your overnight bag for 2 days and 1 night. After breakfast you will start the day with a Welcome/Orientation meeting. We will then travel to Zao Onsen. Zao Onsen sits at an altitude of about 900 meters (3,000 feet) on the slopes of Mount Zao, an active volcano. During the winter months, Zao is one of Japan's leading ski resorts. Zao Onsen's trees become glazed with ice, making them into "snow monsters". After checking into the ryokan we will go to the snow monster lighting to see these "creatures" lit up at night. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at the ryokan included.

Travel: 3 1/2 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 3 Free Day in Zao Onsen

Today is a free day in Zao Onsen. Use this day to go skiing, take a snowshoe tour, or check out the snow monsters. Retrieve your main luggage at the ryokan. Breakfast and dinner at the ryokan included.

Travel: N/A; Walking: TBD

Day 4 Travel to Nyuto Onsen

Before leaving Zao Onsen, you will need to prepare your luggage to transfer to Akita. We will be traveling to Nyuto Onsen and Kakunodate with an overnight bag only. Please prepare your overnight bag for 2 days and 1 night. Today we will travel by train and public highway bus to Nyuto Onsen. Nyuto Onsen is a collection of mostly traditional and rustic onsen ryokan in the mountains of eastern Akita Prefecture. The name Nyuto Onsen means "nipple hot spring" and comes from the suggestive shape of nearby Mount Nyuto rather than the milky/cloudy appearance of the area's hot spring water. Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at the ryokan included.

Travel: 5 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 5 Travel to Kakunodate; Kakunodate - Kakunodate Denshokan, Samurai Homes; Travel to Akita

After breakfast at the ryokan we will travel to Kakunodate. Kakunodate is a former castle town, and while the castle no longer exists, the samurai tradition is still strong. Today, the samurai district has some of the best preserved examples of samurai homes anywhere in Japan. We will tour two homes: the Aoyogi and the Ishiguro. The Aoyogi home is the largest in Kakunodate, and includes multiple buildings with museum collections documenting the samurai traditions and history in Kakunodate. The area open to visitors at the Ishiguro home is limited because the

Ishiguro family still maintains a residence in the home. We will finish our time in Kakunodate at the Denshokan Museum. This museum has numerous local arts and handicrafts on display, the most prominent being items made from cherry tree bark. During the cold winter months, the samurai would earn extra income by making these items. We will depart Kakunodate and travel to Akita by train. You will retrieve your main luggage after checking into the hotel. Breakfast at the ryokan and lunch at a local restaurant is included.

Travel: 1 1/2 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 6 Travel to Aomori; Aomori - Warasse Nebuta Museum; Travel to Hakodate

Before leaving Akita, you will need to prepare your luggage to transfer to Noboribetsu Onsen. We will be traveling to Aomori, Hakodate, and Noboribetsu Onsen with an overnight bag only. Please prepare your overnight bag for 2 days and 1 night. After breakfast we will travel to Aomori by Resort Shirakami. The Resort Shirakami is a sightseeing train along the scenic coastline in northern Japan. Since the train goes through the Tsugaru Peninsula, Tsugaru Shamisen players will board the train for part of the trip. After arriving in Aomori, we will stop at the Nebuta Warasse Museum, dedicated to the city's famous Nebuta Matsuri (Nebuta Festival) held every year in early August. The Nebuta Warasse Museum attempts to capture the spirit of the festival and gives visitors a taste of its lively atmosphere, history, and traditions. From here we will travel to Hakodate. Hakodate was one of the first cities open to the West after the Meiji Restoration. In the evening we will take a cable car to the top of Mt. Hakodate where we will enjoy a panoramic view of Hakodate's night lights. We will also walk through the Motomachi District of Hakodate to enjoy the nighttime lightup. Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at a local restaurant included.

Travel: 4 1/2 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 7 Hakodate - Hakodate Morning Market; Travel to Noboribetsu Onsen

Early in the morning after breakfast we will visit the Hakodate Morning Market where the sellers can prepare the specialties of Hakodate (crab, sea urchin, and squid) fresh from their stalls for breakfast. We will then travel to Noboribetsu Onsen, one of the most popular and famous hot spring resorts in Japan. After arriving at Noboribetsu Onsen and picking up your main luggage, you will have free time to explore places like the Jigoku-dani (Hell Valley) and the other geothermal activity in the area. You will also have time to relax in one of the many hot springs in Noboribetsu Onsen. Breakfast and dinner at the ryokan are included.

Travel: 4 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 8 Sapporo

After breakfast you will have some free time in Noboribetsu Onsen. You will be sent back to Sapporo or Sapporo's Chitose airport, depending on whether you will continue around Japan on your own, or fly home (or back to Tokyo). If going to the airport you can arrive at the airport at 11am or 12:10pm. If returning to Sapporo you can arrive at 12:00pm. Breakfast at the ryokan included.

Travel: 2 Hours Walking: Light

Walking level descriptions:
Light – 0 to 2 miles on level ground

Medium – 2 to 4 miles on level ground or 0 to 2 miles on hilly ground

Heavy – 4 to 6 miles on level ground or 2 to 4 miles on hilly ground

Dates & Pricing

Dates	Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person)	Status
Jan 19, 2020 - Jan 26, 2020	¥483,118/ ¥87,135	Closed
Feb 9, 2020 - Feb 16, 2020	¥483,118/ ¥87,135	Closed
Jan 17, 2021 - Jan 24, 2021	¥483,118/ ¥87,135	Available
Feb 7, 2021 - Feb 14, 2021	¥483,118/ ¥87,135	Available

Inclusions

- Local, licensed, English-speaking, Japanese guides
- **Travel insurance from Travel Guard**, one of the world's largest travel insurance providers, will be provided to everyone from the United States. All others will receive a \$100 per person credit and will be responsible for obtaining their own travel insurance in their own home country. (The insurance provided by Samurai Tours will cover the land portion only. Insurance to cover airfare and other additional expenses is the tour member's responsibility.)
 - Exact coverage dependent on state
 - For residents of the following states please click here for your available plan. CO, FL, IN, KS, MN, MO, MT, NY, and WA
 - For all other states and the District of Columbia click here
 - **Travel Insurance Surcharge:** Depending on your age at the time the travel insurance is purchased, you may be subject to the following surcharge for your travel insurance. Travel insurance surcharges will be due at the same time as your tour deposits. (the surcharge itself is not insured)
 - Up to 69 - \$0
 - 70-74 - \$100
 - 75-79 - \$125
 - 80-84 - \$200
 - 85+ - \$300
 - **Travel Insurance Opt-Out:** If you would prefer to opt out of the travel insurance, please note this at the time of registration. You will receive a \$100 credit per person, which will be reflected on your invoice. In the event that you would need to cancel your tour, cancellation penalties may apply. See the Terms and Conditions page for the Cancellation Fees Schedule.
- All transportation from Tokyo to Sapporo as described in the itinerary
- Lodging for 7 nights in Japanese-style ryokans or western-style hotels
- Meals:
 - Breakfast every morning from Day 2 through Day 8 of the itinerary
 - One Japanese-style lunch
 - Five Japanese-style dinners
- All transportation costs when traveling with the group (transportation costs during scheduled free times are the tour member's responsibility)
- Admission fees to the destinations and activities listed in the Tour Highlights column on the right (itinerary specifics are subject to change)
- Electronic version of itinerary
- Sayonara dinner at the end of the tour
- Baggage transfer from Tokyo to Zao Onsen
- Baggage transfer from Zao Onsen to Akita
- Baggage transfer from Akita to Noboribetsu Onsen

Each tour member receives an electronic copy of our tour handbook. This handbook is full of tips and suggestions taken from our Japan travel experiences that allow you to better plan and prepare for your trip, and therefore enjoy your trip even more. The tips and suggestions included cover everything from how to save while exchanging money, what to pack, some basic Japanese-language tips, general etiquette do's-and-don'ts, ryokan customs, etc.

Exclusions

- Airfare is NOT included.
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included

- Transportation to Tokyo at the beginning of the tour
- Transportation from Sapporo at the end of the tour
- A printed itinerary is not included

Thank you for downloading this PDF version of our tour. Please visit our website at www.samuraitours.com/tours for the most current dates, prices and information.

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