



SAMURAI TOURS

Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan

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Northern Tohoku and Western Hokkaido Self Guided



8 Days/7 Nights

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Tour Overview

Leave behind the busy, modern city of Tokyo as you slowly travel further and further north exploring all that Northern Tohoku and Western Hokkaido have to offer. Tohoku is the northern part of Honshu, the main island of the Japanese archipelago. Tohoku is known as a remote and scenic region, 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, Aizu-Wakamatsu, Nyuto Onsen, Kakunodate, Akita, Aomori, Hakodate, Noboribetsu Onsen, Sapporo

Tour Details

Northern Tohoku and Western Hokkaido are rich in history and traditional Japanese culture. In Aizu-Wakamatsu you will have the opportunity to explore an old Samurai city full of history and tradition. Relax in the hot springs at traditional Nyuto Onsen and travel to the former castle town of Kakunodate. Journey along the coast on the Resort Shirakami before arriving at Hakodate 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.

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Aizu-Wakamatsu with its Samurai History and Traditions
- ✓ Nyuto Onsen
- ✓ Resort Shirakami Train with Tsugaru Shamisen Performance
- ✓ Noboribetsu Onsen

Tour Inclusions

- ✓ Reserved Seat Tickets on all trains
- ✓ Meeting service at the arrival airport
- ✓ Baggage transfer from city to city
- ✓ Electronic version of Tour Handbook and Japanese History
- ✓ Detailed, easy-to-follow directions on how to travel between cities and locations
- ✓ Bi-lingual maps, addresses and phone numbers for all your lodging
- ✓ English-speaking emergency contact number in Japan

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
-  Aizu-Wakamatsu
-  Nyuto Onsen
-  Kakunodate
-  Akita
-  Aomori
-  Hakodate
-  Noboribetsu Onsen
-  Sapporo

Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in Tokyo

You will be welcomed at Tokyo's Narita Airport by a Samurai Tours representative who will give you all tickets and documents you need for your tour, obtain your limousine bus ticket into Tokyo, and assist with boarding the bus to your hotel in Tokyo. No meals are included.

Travel: TBD

Day 2 Travel to Aizu-Wakamatsu; Tour Aizu-Wakamatsu

Today you will transfer your main luggage to Aizu-Wakamatsu. After breakfast you will travel by Shinkansen and local train to Aizu-Wakamatsu. Aizu Wakamatsu is a former castle town with a long Samurai tradition. After arriving at Aizu Wakamatsu and dropping off your luggage, we recommend visiting the Aizu Bukeyashiki (Samurai Mansion). This was the home of an important Samurai, and therefore is very large with dozens of different rooms and sections including gardens, guest rooms, a tea house, an archery range, and a rice mill.

Travel: 3 1/2 Hours

Day 3 Free Day at Aizu-Wakamatsu

Today you can further explore the Samurai city of Aizu Wakamatsu. We recommend starting at the Samurai School where the children of the Samurai attended. Next, you can visit Tsuruga Castle, originally built in 1384. However, it was destroyed by Samurai still loyal to the Tokugawa Shogunate after the Boshin War of 1868, a rebellion against the newly formed Meiji government. Tsuruga Castle was one of the last strongholds of the Boshin War. The castle was rebuilt as a concrete reconstruction in the 1960s, and in renovation works completed in 2011 the color of the roof tiles were changed from grey to the original red tiles. The inside of the castle houses a museum with displays depicting the history of the castle and the Samurai lifestyle. Next, we recommend visiting the Suehiro Brewery, one of the largest and most famous sake producers in Tohoku. Founded in 1850, it has been a family-owned business for eight generations. Suehiro's sake is famous throughout Japan and annually wins domestic and international awards. Suehiro Brewery is the official sake supplier of Toshogu Shrine in Nikko and some sumo and kabuki events, and has been featured in a number of movies and TV dramas. It is open to visitors and offers hourly guided tours. The tour includes a walk through the brewing areas with explanations of the sake making process, a small museum with displays of the brewery's history and the history of sake making, and a visit to the factory store with a tasting bar where you can sample from and buy nearly their entire product line. At the end of the tour you can stop at the cafe that features original desserts which incorporate sake in their recipes. The desserts are developed by the owner's wife. The sake jelly and sake infused cakes are refreshing and recommended. You will retrieve your main luggage from the ryokan in the evening.

Travel: N/A

Day 4 Travel to Nyuto Onsen

Transfer your main luggage to Akita. Today you 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.

Travel: 5 Hours

Day 5 Travel to Kakunodate; Tour Kakunodate; Travel to Akita

After breakfast you will travel by Shinkansen 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. You will have the opportunity to 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 there. You will also have the opportunity to visit 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. You will then depart Kakunodate and travel to Akita by train. You will retrieve your main luggage after checking into the hotel.

Travel: 2 Hours

Day 6 Resort Shirakami Train to Aomori; Tour Aomori; Travel to Hakodate; Tour Hakodate

Today you will transfer your main luggage to Noboribetsu Onsen. After breakfast you 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 recommend stopping 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 you will travel to Hakodate. Hakodate was one of the first cities open to the West after the Meiji Restoration. In the evening we suggest taking a cable car to the top of Mt. Hakodate where you can enjoy a panoramic view of Hakodate's night lights, or walk through the Motomachi District of Hakodate to enjoy the nighttime lightup.

Travel: 7 1/2 Hours

Day 7 Tour Hakodate; Travel to Noboribetsu Onsen

Early in the morning we recommend visiting the Hakodate Morning Market where the sellers can prepare the specialties of Hakodate (crab, sea urchin, and squid) fresh from their stalls for breakfast. You 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.

Travel: 2 1/2 Hours

Day 8 Sayonara

After breakfast you will have some free time in Noboribetsu Onsen. In the afternoon you will travel by express train to Sapporo. After arriving in Sapporo you will continue around Japan on your own, or fly home.

Travel: 1 Hour

Dates & Pricing

Low Season-

¥286,917 (per person, based on double occupancy)

January 6 – February 28

June 16 – August 5

August 18 – August 31

November 16 – December 24

Regular Season-

¥307,202 (per person, based on double occupancy)

March 1 – March 14

May 7 – June 15

September 1 – October 14

Peak Season-

¥334,711 (per person, based on double occupancy)

March 15 – May 6 (Cherry Blossom & Golden Week)

August 6 – August 17 (Obon Holiday)

October 15 – November 15 (Fall Foliage)

December 25 – January 5 (New Years)

Adjustments for 2020 Tours

There will be an additional 5% charge for 2020 tours

The following dates will also be peak season due to the 2020 Olympics

July 10th – Aug 23rd

Inclusions

- Accommodations in 3 Star hotels including all taxes, fees and breakfast every morning (Click the Upgrades tab to view available upgrade options)
 - Tokyo: Western-style hotel such as Shinagawa Prince Hotel
 - Aizu-Wakamatsu: Japanese-style ryokan such as Aizu Higashiyama Onsen Mukaitaki
 - Nyuto Onsen: Japanese-style ryokan such as Ookama Onsen Ryokan
 - Akita: Western-style hotel such as Dormy Inn Akita
 - Hakodate: Western-style hotel such as Four Points by Sheraton Hakodate
 - Noboribetsu Onsen: Japanese-style ryokan such as Daiichi Takimotokan
- Detailed, easy-to-follow directions on how to travel between cities
- Bi-lingual maps, addresses and phone numbers for all your lodging
- 7 Day Ordinary Car JR Rail Pass
- English-speaking emergency contact number in Japan
- Meeting service at the airport
- Airport transfers
- Suggested train schedules including train schedules for 2 hours prior and 2 hours after the suggested time to allow you to choose your own times
- Breakfast every day
- Electronic version of itinerary
- A copy of our “Gaijin on Getas” tour handbook (this is the same popular handbook our escorted tour members receive) which contains 180 pages of Japan travel tips, Japanese language tips, Japanese customs and etiquette and Japanese history to prepare you properly for your trip and allow you to enjoy Japan even more after you arrive.
- Baggage transfer forms (we will provide the necessary forms in Japanese to transfer your main baggage ahead, allowing you the freedom of traveling light. The service provided will only work overnight, so you will need to travel with an overnight bag. The actual transfer fees are not included and will be paid by you at the time of transfer. These fees normally run between 1,250 Yen and 1,750 Yen)

What's Not Included

- Airfare is not included
- Local transportation (subways, buses, taxis, etc.)
- All admission fees
- Lunches and dinners (except where noted)
- Desserts at any included meals (except where noted)
- Drinks other than water and tea at any included meals (except where noted)
- 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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