



SIGNATURE TOUR

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2025 SNOW SPECTACULAR TOUR OF JAPAN

This spectacular winter tour of Hokkaido Japan has it all; the Sapporo Snow Festival, drift ice, snowshoe walks, dancing red-crested cranes, local food and culture and more .

"...They provided a spectacular tour, covering all aspects so efficiently. ..."
 - Sheryl Collins


DURATION 13 days

THEME Remote Japan Tours, Winter Tours

GROUP SIZE Min 6 - Max 10

TOP TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



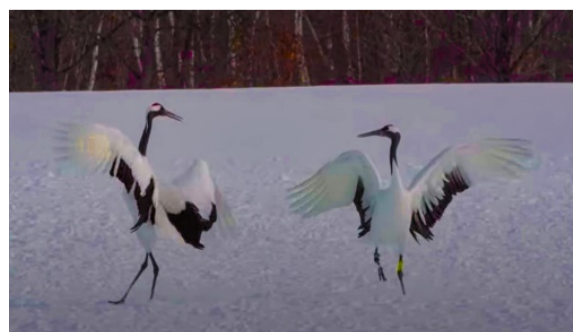
Join the festivity at Sapporo Snow Festival

The main street of Sapporo is transformed into a wonderland with the giant snow carvings.



Be up-close with Hokkaido's wild life

Spot many cute animals including fox, deer, sea eagles and seals in the wildness of Hokkaido.



Walk with Japanese snowshoe

A fabulous opportunity to walk on the snow on frozen lakes and through an ancient forest.



Watch the whimsical courtship dance of Japanese red-crested cranes

These beautiful creature are magnificent as they dance for you on the snow. Their red crowns add a touch of colour to their otherwise stark outfits.



Witness drift ice

Watch the floating ice in the Sea of Okhotsk. It's a unique option to walk on it, too.

Enjoy local food

The tour offers a great range of local and traditional dishes such as salmon and scallops.

[SEE FULL TOUR ITINERARY](#)

TOUR OVERVIEW

The **2025 Snow Spectacular Tour of Japan** is staged in the wilderness of Japan's northern island of Hokkaido and runs for an unforgettable 13 days. The tour reveals the spectacular beauty of Japan during wintertime through an amazing selection of experiences. The highlights include the internationally renowned **Sapporo Snow Festival**, drift ice in the remote Sea of Okhotsk, UNESCO World Heritage listed rugged **Shiretoko Peninsula**, and charming historic city of **Hakodate**. Along the way, you will play like a child in the snow making a snowman, walking with Japanese snowshoes in a panoramic snowfield, and diving into virgin powder snow and being a snow angel!

The tour also allows you to witness the rare sight of Japan's **protected red-crested cranes** in their natural environment. Learn about the fascinating traditional people of Hokkaido, at the engrossing **Upopoy National Ainu Museum**. You stay in **authentic traditional Japanese inns** and appreciate the best of Japan's hot spring onsen hospitality, local food and culture. This tour lets you encounter first-hand the **sublime beauty of Japan covered in snow** and is suitable for travelers who love travelling in the wilderness and delving into remote local cultures.

ITINERARY

[DOWNLOAD FULL ITINERARY](#)

▼ Day 1: Arrival in Tokyo

Welcome to Japan! On arrival at one of Tokyo's international airports, you will meet a member of the Journey to the East team and be escorted to your hotel at Haneda Airport. After a good night's sleep, you will be ready to start your **2025 Snow Spectacular Tour of Japan**.

 **Tokyo (Villa Fontaine Grand Haneda Airport or similar)**

 **No meals**

▼ Day 2: Transfer to Abashiri, Hokkaido

This morning, you will transfer by **domestic flight to Hokkaido** to begin your adventure. With large tracts of pristine wilderness, Hokkaido is a popular destination for those who love vast, open landscapes and extensive wildlife. Upon arrival at Memanbetsu airport, you will begin a guided tour of **Abashiri**. Today, you will visit **Okhotsk Ryu-hyo (drift ice) Museum** to gain the background knowledge of nature and wildlife in the Sea of Okhotsk. Later, you will drop by a wonderful **glassware gallery** where ice-like glassware is being created using **recycled fluorescent tubes**. A great opportunity to learn the environmental impacts to the northern waters.

Tonight you will travel to **UNESCO World Heritage site of Shiretoko Peninsula**. Shiretoko was added to the list for the irreplaceable value of its ecosystem and biodiversity. For the next two nights, you will immerse yourself in the world of ice and sea.

 **Shari (Kitakobushi Shiretoko or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 3: Shiretoko



This morning you will put a pair of Japanese snowshoes and walk on the frozen **Shiretoko Five Lakes**. Overlooking the snow covered Shiretoko mountain range against winter blue sky, it is amazingly unforgettable experience.

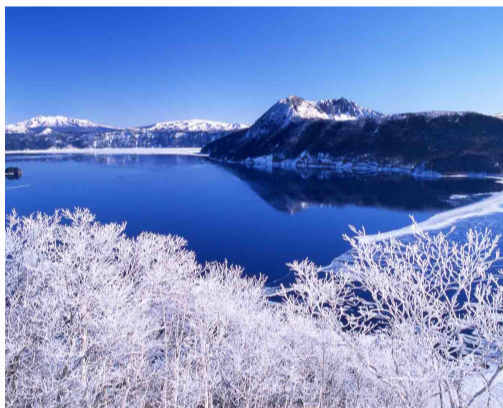
In the afternoon, you have an option of walking on drift ice. You need to meet certain physical conditions and wear very thick wetsuits, but this will also be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be in the wild nature.

Another night in your resort style accommodation and enjoy buffet dinner and onsen hot spring bath.

 **Shari (Kitakobushi Shiretoko or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 4: Shiretoko to Lake Mashu



Leaving Shiretoko, you will travel further into the wildness of **Notsuke Peninsula** on the east coast between Shiretoko and Nemuro Peninsulas. It is a curved 26 km sandspit sticking out into the Nemuro Strait. The long and thin peninsula offers an abundance of wildlife and pristine nature all year around. Eagles, foxes, deer, seals, cranes and scores of migratory birds, just to name a few, can be seen in the Notsuke Peninsula, and this is the reason you are here today.

In the afternoon, you will head to the Akan-Mashu National Park. The pristine **Lake Mashu** is known as one of the clearest lakes in the world. The landscape appears otherworldly from late January to late February as the surrounding trees are coated in shimmering frost. Lake Mashu's distinct shade of sapphire blue stands out vividly against the pure white winter surroundings. In the indigenous Ainu's language, the lake is called Kamui-to, or "Lake of the Gods," indicative of its otherworldly appearance.

Tonight you will stay at a traditional onsen ryokan in this area. Enjoy true Hokkaido hospitality and onsen therapy!

 **Yoroushi (Yuyado Daiichi or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 5: Kushiro to Sapporo





This morning, you will travel by a private minibus to **Kushiro Shitsugen National Park**. It is a **huge wetlands area**, which was designated as a protected area in 1987, to protect the then dwindling populations of tancho-zaru, Japan's beautiful **red-crested white crane**. One of the reasons to come this far in Hokkaido in winter is to see their courtship dance. Here you visit the crane sanctuary to see this elegant bird in its natural environment and to learn more about ongoing conservation efforts and breeding programs.

In the afternoon, an express train takes you westwards through the stunning views of the centre of Hokkaido's snow covered land to the city of Sapporo, the host of **internationally famous Sapporo Snow Festival**. As a relatively new city that developed in the late 19th century as the country modernized, **Sapporo** was able to apply some of the new urban planning concepts popular at the time. It has unusually wide boulevards and large public parks. Sapporo today is a welcoming and cosmopolitan city with a lively food scene, fashionable shopping malls, and stylish cafes.



Sapporo (Sapporo Grand Hotel or similar)



Breakfast, Dinner

▼ Day 6: Sapporo Snow Festival



Your guide takes you on a **walking tour of central Sapporo** this morning. You stop to have a look at the historic Clock Tower, built in 1878 as an agricultural college to pass down the western farming method to the new land. Wander past other early brick buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries on our way to Odori Koen, the **1.5km-long stretch of public park** in the city's heart. The **Odori Koen** is the main venue for the fabulous **2025 Sapporo Snow Festival** and you have the afternoon and evening free to savour more of the festival atmosphere or explore Sapporo's attractive streetscape and try some of its great restaurants.

The **Sapporo Snow Festival** is one of the most popular events in Japan. Huge sculptures are carved in packed snow and displayed along the city's central boulevard, attracting highly skilled participants from Japan and all over the world. Apart from the sculptures, the city turns on musical performances (delivered from stages made of ice), builds ice bars serving mulled wine and sake cocktails, and creates snow activities for families and kids. It's a buoyant, vibrant festival atmosphere set against a beautiful snowy backdrop.



Sapporo (Sapporo Grand Hotel or similar)



Breakfast

▼ Day 7: Otaru and Sapporo



This morning your guide will take you on a morning guided tour of the nearby **picturesque canal town of Otaru**. Once a vibrant trading centre where the **indigenous Ainu people, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian traders mingled to exchange goods**, Otaru retains many of the grand stone and brick buildings



from its late 19th century boom times. Many of the warehouses from its trading past have been converted into attractive museums and cafes along its canals. Today you wander down Otaru's iconic central canal with its Victorian-era street lamps.

Otaru is also famous for the number of sushi restaurants in relatively small city. You will have a sushi lunch here before heading back to Sapporo for free evening to enjoy more of the festival feel.

 **Sapporo (Sapporo Grand Hotel or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch**

▼ Day 8: Shiraoi, Noboribetsu and Lake Toya



This morning you will leave Sapporo in a private minibus to the town of Shiraoi famous for its **wagyu brand Shiraoi Beef**. It is also a home of **Upopoy National Ainu Museum**. Set in a beautiful natural environment, it is a great place to learn about the culture of Ainu people.

After the Shiraoi beef lunch at a local family run restaurant, we head to **Noboribetsu hot springs** which generate some 10,000 tons of hot water a day. Here your guide will take you on the Jigokudani (Hell Valley) Nature Walk, an interesting walk where you can observe intermittently erupting geysers along the path.

The final destination today is **Lake Toya**. Here you will stay at a brand new lake side resort for a very relaxed two days.

 **Lake Toya (Tsuruga Resort Hikari no Uta or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 9: Lake Toya and Toyoura



Today you will visit a nearby **fishing village of Toyoura**, a premium scallop producer. Luckily the **scallops** are in season in winter, and a local guide will explain the fascinating story of how scallops grow from a minute egg to the delicious scallop. You will experience an auction as well as a quick cooking lesson while you are here. Of course, you will get to taste-test the scallops at lunch.

Dropping at a local dairy farm for a quick ice cream stop before arriving and relaxing back at Lake Toya.

 **Lake Toya (Tsuruga Resort Hikari no Uta or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 10: Hakodate



This morning you will go up to the top of **Mt Usu** by ropeway. Mt Usu is an active volcano and the 6-minute ropeway ride will take you up close to the summit. From the observation deck, you can enjoy panoramic views of Lake Toya and **Showa Shinzan**. Showa Shinzan is a lava dome created by the earth movements between 1943 and 1945.

From here, you will travel southward in your private minibus to the enchanting city of **Hakodate**. This historic port city with its 19th century streetscapes has a distinctly European feel. It was designated one of Japan's two foreign trade ports that could legitimately engage with foreign traders during the national isolation policy period, and that foreign influence and architecture make this city so intriguing.

In the evening we head up **Mount Hakodate**. From the hill-side restaurant, there is a panoramic view of Hakodate all lit-up at night, considered one of the top three views in Japan.

 **Hakodate (Century Marine Hakodate)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 11: Snow activities



Today is all about playing in snow! You will head to a nearby snowfield from Hakodate and try snowshoe walking with great panoramic views at the top of a mountain. All the clothing and shoes are available for rent and it caters for every fitness level. In the afternoon you will continue playing with snowmobile and banana boat on snow.

This evening is free. After the fun packed day, relax in Hakodate and stroll around red brick district checking out local souvenirs and special winter food.

 **Hakodate (Century Marina Hakodate)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch**

▼ Day 12: Hakodate



The **Hakodate Morning Market** trades a wide array of seafood in a relatively casual environment and many small restaurants allow you to sample the local delicacies. On the guided tour of Hakodate, you will visit a number of historical sites such as **Goryokaku Fort** as well as **Motomachi district**. The Goryokaku Fort was built in five-sided star shape, designed by a samurai, Takeda Ayasaburo who was influenced by a French military engineer Vauban. The fort, in the center of Hakodate, was completed in 1864 as Japan's first Western-style fortification.

This evening you will gather together one last time for a farewell dinner.

 **Hakodate (Century Marina Hakodate)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 13: Departure

This morning, you will check out of your hotel after breakfast and your **2025 Snow Spectacular Tour of Japan** concludes. We will be happy to make your personal transfer arrangements from here whether it is flying or taking shinkansen back to Tokyo, staying a few more days in Hokkaido, or travelling onto a different part of Japan. **Please see our Tour Extension Model Itineraries for inspirations!**

Note: The cost of transfer to your departure airport is not included in our Small Group Tours as we found many guests choose to stay in Japan a bit longer, however, we will be happy to arrange a transfer to your next destination. Please see our FAQ for more details.

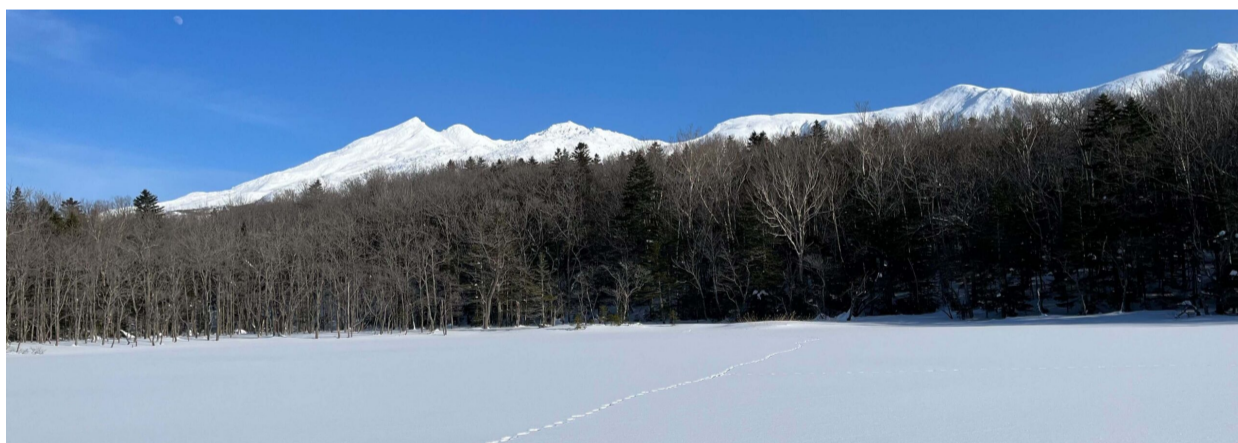


DATES & PRICES

2025 Snow Spectacular Tour of Japan

TOUR CODE	STARTS	DEPARTS FROM	AVAILABLE PLACES	CURRENCY	PP TWIN SHARE	SINGLE SUPPLEMENT		
GWS-25	Jan 31, 2025	Tokyo (Haneda)	Available	AUD\$	9,350	3,350	ASK A QUESTION	BOOK NOW

[Wait list me for this tour](#) Choose a different currency at the very top right of the page.



INCLUSIONS

Each guest is personally looked after with one-on-one interactions with our hand-picked, expert tour guides. As part of your investment, this tour includes:

- ✓ First-class wisdom and higher standard of individual care and attention
- ✓ 12 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns)
- ✓ All breakfasts
- ✓ 8 lunches (3 free choice lunches)
- ✓ 8 dinners (3 free choice dinners)
- ✓ Airport meet & greet and hotel transfer by public transport on arrival
- ✓ All local transport (train and private minibus)
- ✓ A domestic flight from Tokyo to Memanbetsu
- ✓ Expert English speaking tour guides (Locally licensed)



✓ Cultural activities and entry fees included in itinerary

DISCLAIMER: Unless otherwise stated, this tour does not include the costs of international and domestic airfares, transfers on the last day, travel insurance, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, transport during free time, personal expenses (laundry, internet, telephone, coin lockers etc.) and Visa (if required).



WHO THIS JAPAN TOUR IS FOR...

This is a perfect tour for people who:

- ▶ Want to **immerse oneself in vast snowfield** in Hokkaido Japan
- ▶ Wish to experience **wildness** and witness **wildlife**
- ▶ Enjoy local culture in remote regions of Japan in **Hokkaido in winter**
- ▶ Like to join a small group tour (maximum 10) professionally organised by a specialist tour operator
- ▶ Be up-close and **interact with locals** through small group activities and local restaurants
- ▶ Experience a **variety in style**, and typically 4 star **boutique accommodation** with private bathroom



REVIEWS

Have a question about this tour? Get in touch with our staff directly.

CONTACT US



INFORMATION

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