

## BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

### 2025 WHITE CHRISTMAS TOUR OF JAPAN (SIGNATURE)

**Start:** Friday, 12 December 2025 from Tokyo  
**Finish:** Friday, 26 December 2025 at Sapporo  
**Duration:** 15 days  
**Group size:** 8 people  
**Cost estimate:** AUD \$10,300 per person  
**Single supplement:** AUD \$2,600 per person  
**Ref:** GWC-25

#### TOUR OVERVIEW

The 2025 White Christmas Tour of Japan is an opportunity for one of the most memorable Christmas holidays you have ever had. Be part of the cultural and traditional rituals which can be experienced only at this time of the year. Although the Japanese are mostly not Christians, Japan offers much of the traditional spirit associated with Christmas.

Snow sets the scene, but the coloured lights and street decorations add greatly to the season. The holiday feeling is in the air as the most important holiday in Japan is only a few days away – New Year's Day.

Cities in Japan do not receive much snowfall in December. That is why we head to the mountains and the northern island of Hokkaido, to give you a real White Christmas experience. The snow-clad temples, shrines and Japanese castles all compete for attention with the stunning natural beauty of the countryside at this time of the year.

The 2025 White Christmas Tour of Japan includes some of the must-see destinations such as Kawaguchiko for the best views of Mt Fuji; Takayama and Shirakawago for picturesque village scenes in the snow; and of course Hokkaido for its famous powder snow and special winter experiences.

\*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
1	Fri 12/12/2025	Airport meet and greet on arrival	Welcome to Japan! On arrival at one of Tokyo's international airports, you will be met by a Journey to the East guide and escorted to your hotel by public transport (train or airport coach). After a good night's sleep, you will be ready to start the first full day of your 2025 White Christmas Tour of Japan.	No meals	Mitsui Garden Hotel Kyobashi [Moderate Twin/Queen]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
2	Sat 13/12/2025	Guided tour of Tokyo	<p>After orientation with your guide, you begin your exploration of Tokyo. A dazzling metropolis characterised by soaring towers and neon, Japan's capital is also an intriguing collection of small neighbourhoods each with their own distinct flavour. As you explore the city, you'll also get beyond its surface to discover some of the local places where ordinary Tokyoites live and socialise.</p> <p>Today you make good use of Tokyo's efficient train system and head to the lovely neighbourhood of Fukagawa. Despite being close to the business districts of central Tokyo, Fukagawa has a laid-back and serene atmosphere, characteristic of Tokyo's traditional "shitamachi," the old heart of the city. This bayside district was historically a merchant neighbourhood, and it still retains an unpretentious, down-to-earth feel. At this time of the year, people are busy preparing for the New Year events and you will catch the vibe of the most important event in the Japanese calendar.</p> <p>While you are in the area, you will visit Kiyosumi Garden. Originally built by a local lord in the Edo period, the garden was later owned by the Iwasaki family, the founder of the Mitsubishi conglomerate as a place to entertain guests and employees. It is an exemplary stroll-style garden with a large pond in the middle punctuated by magnificent stones transported from all over Japan.</p> <p>After a group lunch, your guide will take you to a Christmas market to enjoy the modern commercial side of Japanese people's lives. The beautiful window displays and shop decorations will instantly get you into the mood for this very special holiday!</p> <p>After a full day's exploration, you will have a welcome dinner at a local Japanese izakaya pub.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Mitsui Garden Hotel Kyobashi [Moderate Twin/Queen]
3	Sun 14/12/2025	Transfer to and guided tour of Kawaguchiko (Mt Fuji)	<p>Today you leave Tokyo transferring by train to your next destination Kawaguchiko. This small town is located in the lakes district in the foothills of Mt Fuji. Kawaguchiko offers some breathtaking views of the majestic Mt Fuji and its lakes and hosts several boutique museums and galleries.</p> <p>Tonight, you will stay at a traditional Japanese inn, and sleep on a futon bedding in a tatami matted Japanese style bedroom. Here you have the chance to soak in a hot-spring onsen bath with dramatic views of Mt Fuji across the lake (weather permitting of course!).</p> <p>Dinner will be a multi-course Japanese kaiseki banquet.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Fuji Ginkei [Japanese style room with futon bedding]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
4	Mon 15/12/2025	Transfer to and guided tour of Matsumoto	<p>Once again, onboard express trains you will travel to the city of Matsumoto today. Matsumoto's beginnings go back to the 8th century, later becoming an important castle town ruled by a powerful clan in the 1600s. Its feudal past is best exemplified today by the impressive castle that dominates the city's skyline. Your guide will take you on a tour of Matsumoto's castle, Japan's oldest wooden castle and one of the nation's five castles designated national treasures. The black wooden structure is a strong contrast against the white snow. To explore the castle's wooden interior, you climb to the top of its distinctive black-and-white turret.</p> <p>You will have dinner at a local restaurant tonight.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Matsumoto Marunouchi Hotel [Deluxe Double/Twin]
5	Tue 16/12/2025	Guided tour of Takayama and Shirakawago	<p>This morning, a private minibus will take you to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shirakawa-go, in the heart of the rugged Hida region. The view of the exquisite rural village features the traditional thatched-roof farmhouses unique to Japan's alpine regions. With their steeply slanted roofs built to withstand heavy snowfalls, they resemble "hands clasped together in prayer" (hence their name, gasshozukuri). A walk through the village allows you to experience the magic of the farmhouses in the snow, and learn more about the construction of these houses and the traditional life of the villagers.</p> <p>Later on, you will arrive at your next destination Takayama. Ambling through the old streets, you will learn about the history of this central Japan's city.</p> <p>You will have another chance of staying at a Japanese-style accommodation in Takayama.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Honjin Hiranoya Bekkan [Japanese style room]
6	Wed 17/12/2025	Guided tour of Takayama	<p>Today you will experience local life and tradition in Takayama. Firstly, a walking guided tour of Takayama's Edo period streetscapes including the 200-year-old morning market. You will then have a cooking lesson from a local lady and learn the traditional foods of the area.</p> <p>Enjoy a free afternoon to pursue your personal interests such as cycling, walking, visiting a sake brewery or small museums to learn more about Takayama.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Honjin Hiranoya Bekkan [Japanese style room]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
7	Thu 18/12/2025	Transfer to and guided tour of Kyoto	<p>This morning you will take an express train to Kyoto. Kyoto is the cultural heart of Japan and the guardian of many of its ancient traditions. Originally made capital in 794, present-day Kyoto offers an endless range of ancient temples and Shinto shrines, contemplative gardens, traditional craft shops and refined restaurants.</p> <p>Upon arrival, you will visit Nijo Castle and Golden Pavilion, two of Kyoto's iconic sites. In the evening, explore the historical Gion area on foot with your guide on the way to the restaurant tonight. The guide will take you through atmospheric backstreets to discover Kyoto's traditional culture and architecture. You may spot a geisha or two on the way to their performance engagement.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Cross Hotel Kyoto [Superior King/Twin]
8	Fri 19/12/2025	Guided tour of Kyoto and free afternoon	<p>This morning you will visit another famous icon of Kyoto, Fushimi Inari shrine. While you are in the area, you will also learn about Japan's drink of choice, sake, which Fushimi is for.</p> <p>After a group lunch, the remainder of the day is free. Why not visit Kyoto's kitchen, Nishiki Market and watch people stocking up for their New Year festivities.</p> <p>For dinner tonight, try one of the thousands of restaurants in central Kyoto ranging from casual ramen shops to Michelin-star restaurants. Your guide will be happy to give you local advice.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch	Cross Hotel Kyoto [Superior King/Twin]
9	Sat 20/12/2025	Transfer to and guided tour of Hakodate	<p>After a few days exploring the central Honshu (main island), you take a domestic flight to Hakodate in Hokkaido for the second half of the 2025 White Christmas Tour of Japan.</p> <p>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, and foreign influence and architecture make this city so intriguing. On the guided tour of Hakodate, you will visit several historical sites in the Motomachi district as well as the heritage Red Brick Warehouse district down on the waterfront (along with the giant Christmas tree!) The Ainu Museum included in the tour provides information on the diversity by celebrating the history and culture of Hokkaido's indigenous people.</p> <p>In the evening, you head up Mount Hakodate. From the hillside restaurant, there is a panoramic view of Hakodate all lit up at night, which is considered one of the top three views in Japan.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Nipponia Hakodate Minatomachi [VMG Grand Twin]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
10	Sun 21/12/2025	Guided tour of Hakodate	<p>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. Next is a visit to the fascinating remains of Goryokaku Fort. The fort was built in a five-sided star shape, designed by a samurai, Takeda Ayasaburo who was influenced by a French military engineer Vauban. The fort, in the centre of Hakodate, was completed in 1864 as Japan's first Western-style fortification.</p> <p>The remainder of the day is free. There is no shortage of Christmas atmosphere here. Especially the gorgeous Christmas market near your hotel.</p>	Breakfast	Nipponia Hakodate Minatomachi [VMG Grand Twin]
11	Mon 22/12/2025	Transfer to and afternoon at Tomamu	<p>Today you will transfer by express trains to a wonderful snow resort, Tomamu. Upon arrival, you will waste no time and get stuck in the powder snow. This afternoon, you will strap on snowshoes and enjoy a guided snowshoe walk. The guide will carefully instruct you on how to wear and walk in snowshoes and provide information about the wildlife living in the snowy mountains, making it easy for first-timers to enjoy the experience.</p> <p>Tonight for dinner, you will enjoy a buffet at the hotel which uses local Hokkaido ingredients and is set amongst the forest, providing a beautiful snowy backdrop.</p> <p>After dinner, you may like to head to Kirin-no-yu by the resort shuttle bus. Kirin-no-yu is an open-air bath surrounded by nature where you can bathe with the view of the snowfield whilst gazing at the starry sky at night or retreat to your room to enjoy a jacuzzi and sauna.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Hoshino Resorts Tomamu [Suite Twin Room at Resonare]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
12	Tue 23/12/2025	A day at Tomamu	<p>Today is your free day in Tomamu.</p> <p>The choice of activities is endless if you want some adventure you may rent some skis and enjoy the fabulous powder snow, or for something a little more relaxing the "Terrace of Frost Tree" can be accessed through a single ride on the Unkai Gondola from the mid-mountain area, here you can see the pure white trees covered in snow glistening, and also the magnificent Hidaka Mountains.</p> <p>If hands-on activities are more your style, you can consider Whey Soap Making, Ezo Birch Craft, Baumkuchen Making or even Pond Ice Fishing.</p> <p>This evening for dinner, we recommend you enjoy one of the many delicious restaurant options of Hotalu Street, and then take the resort shuttle to the nearby Ice Village. Whilst at the Ice Village, you may like to visit the Ice Bar or Ice Parlor, write a postcard to friends and relatives back home and post using the Ice Post Office, or visit the Ice Village observation deck and take the Ice Slide down to the town.</p>	Breakfast	Hoshino Resorts Tomamu [Suite Twin Room at Resonare]
13	Wed 24/12/2025	Transfer to and guided tour of Sapporo	<p>This morning you will make your last transfer on the tour to Sapporo.</p> <p>After arrival, your guide will help you understand the unusual story behind the development of Sapporo through a walking guided tour. You stop to have a look at the historic Clock Tower, a former agricultural college built in 1878. Wander past other early brick buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries on your way to Odori Koen, the 1.5 km-long stretch of public park in the city's heart. For lunch, you will try Sapporo's most famous dish, Sapporo ramen!</p> <p>It is Christmas Eve today. Sapporo has a great Christmas Market and perhaps you will find memorable souvenirs there. You will enjoy a sushi dinner tonight.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Sapporo Grand Hotel [Standard Large Twin]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
14	Thu 25/12/2025	Guided tour of Otaru	<p>It is Christmas Day today, and you will start late this morning. You may like to have some peace and quiet or talk to your family back home.</p> <p>There is no more desirable place to be on Christmas Day in Japan than the picturesque canal town of Otaru. In the afternoon, your guide will show you the charming town of Otaru. It was 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 style street lamps.</p> <p>Back in Sapporo, it is your last time to get together as a group and you will a group Christmas dinner to celebrate a memorable White Christmas Tour of Japan.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Sapporo Grand Hotel [Standard Large Twin]
15	Fri 26/12/2025	Departure	<p>After breakfast, your 2025 White Christmas Tour of Japan concludes. You can fly out of Sapporo or stay in Japan a little longer. We will be delighted to make arrangements for your personal transfer whether it is a flight to Tokyo, an extra stay in Hokkaido or travel to a different part of Japan. Please see our Extension Model Itineraries for inspiration.</p> <p>Note: The cost of a transfer(s) to your departure airport is not included in our Small Group Tours to add flexibility to each guest as we find many guests choose to stay in Japan a bit longer. Please see our FAQ for more details.</p>	Breakfast	
Inclusions			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 14 nights' accommodation as per itinerary</li> <li>■ Meals as per the itinerary</li> <li>■ Airport meet &amp; greet and hotel transfer by public transport on arrival</li> <li>■ All local transport (train, bus and private minivans)</li> <li>■ Domestic flight from Osaka to Hakodate</li> <li>■ Expert English-speaking tour guides (locally licensed)</li> <li>■ Cultural activities and entry fees included in the itinerary</li> <li>■ Luggage transfers (1 piece per person)</li> </ul>		

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		Exclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ International and domestic airfare (unless otherwise stated)</li> <li>■ Travel insurance</li> <li>■ Transfer on the last day</li> <li>■ Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (except the 1st drink at each meal)</li> <li>■ Tips and gratuities (not routinely expected in Japan)</li> <li>■ Transport during free time</li> <li>■ Personal expenses (laundry, coin-locker, internet, telephone etc.)</li> <li>■ Visa (if required)</li> </ul>		