



2025 WHITE CHRISTMAS TOUR OF JAPAN

Want to experience a different White Christmas in Japan this year? With snow capped Mt Fuji and a farming village, gorgeously lit up cities, and unique winter activities at the gorgeous snow resort Tomamu in Hokkaido, this tour is for you!

*"This tour changed our perceptions of what group tours can offer."
 -- Deborah Armour*



DURATION
 15 days



THEME
 Remote Japan Tours, Winter Tours



GROUP SIZE
 Min 2 - Max 8

TOP TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Christmas illumination in Tokyo

Experience Japan literally lit up with gorgeous Christmas decorations



Wonderful snow resort in Tomamu

Enjoy the powder snow and endless winter activities at Tomamu in Hokkaido



Mighty Mt Fuji

View Mt Fuji, the symbol of Japan, clearest in winter at the onsen town of Kawaguchiko



Old capital Kyoto in winter

Visit the ever popular Japanese old capital Kyoto in preparation for the New Year



Sapporo, the snow capital of Japan

Don't miss Sapporo with all its winter charms and Christmas atmosphere



UNESCO World Heritage site of Shirakawago

Get a glimpse into a traditional farming village life in winter at Shirakawago

📄 SEE FULL TOUR ITINERARY

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.

ITINERARY

📄 DOWNLOAD FULL ITINERARY

▼ Day 1: Arrival in Tokyo



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**.

🏠 Tokyo (Mitsui Garden Hotel Kyobashi)

🍴 No meals

▼ Day 2: Tokyo



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.

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 byside 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.

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.

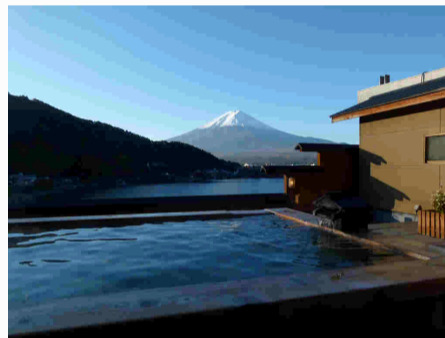
After a group lunch, your guide will take you to a Christmas market to enjoy the modern commercial side of Japanese people's lives. The beautiful window displays and shop decorations will instantly get you into the mood for this very special holiday!

After a full day's exploration, you will have a **welcome dinner** at a **local Japanese izakaya pub**.

 **Tokyo (Mitsui Garden Hotel Kyobashi)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 3: Kawaguchiko



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.

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!).

Dinner will be a multi-course Japanese kaiseki banquet.

 **Kawaguchiko (Fuji Ginkei or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 4: Matsumoto



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, we climb to the top of its distinctive black-and-white turret.

You will have dinner at a local restaurant tonight.

 **Matsumoto (Matsumoto Marunouchi Hotel or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 5: Shirakawago and Takayama



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.

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.

You will have another chance of staying at a Japanese-style accommodation in Takayama.

 **Takayama (Honjin Hiranoya Bekkan)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 6: Takayama



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.

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.

 **Takayama (Honjin Hiranoya Bekkan)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 7: Takayama to Kyoto



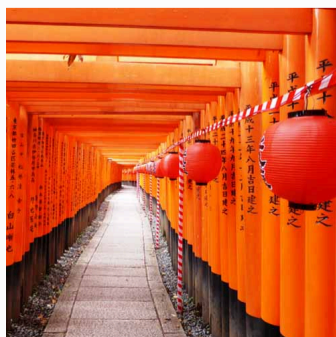
This morning you will take an express train to Kyoto. Kyoto is the cultural heart of Japan and the guardian of many of its ancient traditions. Originally made capital in 794, present-day Kyoto offers an endless range of ancient temples and Shinto shrines, contemplative gardens, traditional craft shops and refined restaurants.

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.

 **Kyoto (Cross Hotel Kyoto)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 8: Kyoto



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.



Breakfast, Lunch

▼ Day 9: Transfer to Hakodate



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**.

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.

In the evening we 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.

Hakodate (Nipponia Hakodate Minatomachi or similar)

Breakfast, Dinner

▼ Day 10: 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. 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.

The remainder of the day is free. There is no shortage of Christmas atmosphere here. Especially the gorgeous Christmas market near your hotel.

Hakodate (Nipponia Hakodate Minatomachi or similar)

Breakfast

▼ Day 11: Tomamu



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.

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.

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**.

Tomamu (Hoshino Resorts Tomamu)



Today is your free day in Tomamu.

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.

If hands-on activities are more your style, you can consider Whey Soap Making, Ezo Birch Craft, Baumkuchen Making or even Pond Ice Fishing.

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.



Tomamu (Hoshino Resorts Tomamu)



Breakfast

▼ Day 13: Transfer to Sapporo



This morning you will make your last transfer on the tour to Sapporo.

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!**

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.

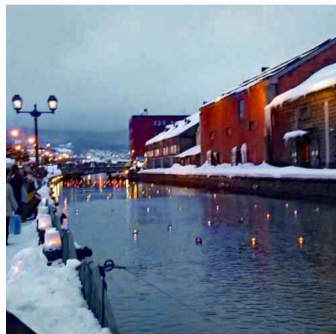


Sapporo (Sapporo Grand Hotel or similar)



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

▼ Day 14: Sapporo



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.

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.

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**.



Sapporo (Sapporo Grand Hotel or similar)

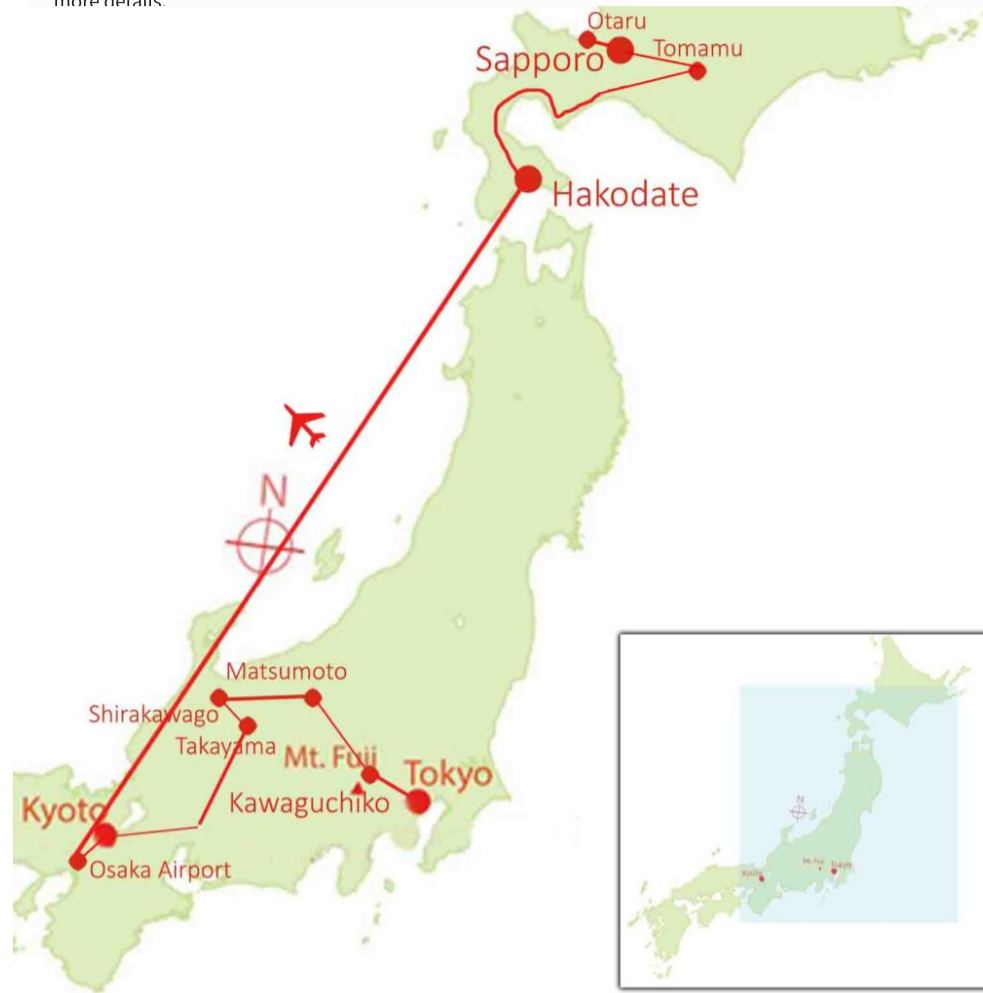


Breakfast, Dinner



Model itineraries for inspiration.

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.



DATES & PRICES

2025 White Christmas Tour of Japan

Show Prices in:

TOUR CODE	START DATE	START CITY	AVAILABLE PLACES	CURRENCY	PP TWIN SHARE	SINGLE SUPPLEMENT		
GWC-25	12 Dec'25	Tokyo	Fully Booked	AUD \$	10,300	2,600	ASK A QUESTION	WAIT-LIST



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
- ✓ 14 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns)
- ✓ All breakfasts
- ✓ 5 lunches
- ✓ 10 dinners
- ✓ Airport meet & greet and hotel transfer by public transport on arrival
- ✓ All local transport (train, bus and private minivans)
- ✓ Domestic flight from Osaka to Hakodate
- ✓ Expert English speaking tour guides (Locally licensed)
- ✓ Cultural activities and entry fees included in itinerary