

## BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

### 2026 FOOD TOUR OF HOKKAIDO JAPAN (SIGNATURE)

**Start:** Monday, 1 June 2026 from Sapporo (New Chitose)

**Finish:** Saturday, 13 June 2026 at Sapporo

**Duration:** 13 days

**Group size:** 10 people

**Cost estimate:** AUD \$10,350 per person

**Single supplement:** AUD \$2,230 per person

**Ref:** GFH-26

### TOUR OVERVIEW

The 2026 Food Tour of Hokkaido, Japan, is the latest in the range of our frequently commended Food Tours. This 13-day Japan Food Tour is staged on the island of Hokkaido. Hokkaido is becoming very popular among serious Japan lovers as the next 'it' destination, and you will visit many of the untapped gems.

Early pioneers began farming in Hokkaido in the 16th century. However, it was a government policy to develop Hokkaido as a source of primary production in the 19th century when broadacre rice production, cattle grazing, dairy farming and vegetable horticulture started on a large scale. Hokkaido also has abundant high-quality seafood, being surrounded by the rich arctic and subarctic waters of the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean. The indigenous people of Hokkaido, the Ainu, add a fascinating and distinct culture to the island.

\*The group size of our Hokkaido tours is a maximum of 10, instead of our usual 8, because we use a comfortable larger size minibus throughout the tour to zip around Hokkaido. Due to this, we also require a minimum of 6 guests for this tour to be guaranteed to operate.

\*As this Food Tour is carefully designed to showcase the variety of Japanese traditional and modern meals, we are unable to alter menus to accommodate individual dietary preferences, including allergies.

\*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
1	Mon 1/6/2026	Airport meet and greet on arrival	<p>On your arrival in Sapporo's New Chitose Airport or JR Sapporo Station, you will meet a Journey to the East guide who will escort you to your hotel, which is located inside the airport terminal. No need to worry about being stuck in the airport, even if you arrive early. The New Chitose Airport is an amazing airport and a destination in itself. It has a ramen alley, a chocolate factory, theme parks, great shops and restaurants and even an onsen!</p> <p>After a good night's sleep, you will be ready to start the first full day of your 2026 Food Tour of Hokkaido, Japan, tomorrow.</p> <p>Although Hokkaido is known for its abundant snow, great skiing, and freezing winters, <b>our food tour travels in early summer, the best</b></p>	No meals	Air Terminal Hotel [Standard Twin]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
			<p><b>season in Hokkaido.</b> On average, the temperatures range from approximately 12°C (54°F) overnight to a maximum of approximately 22°C (72°F) during the day.</p>		
2	Tue 2/6/2026	Guided tour of Obihiro	<p>After breakfast at the hotel, your first stop is an <b>asparagus farm</b> to try the fresh and high-quality Hokkaido vegetables.</p> <p>The next visit is one of the highlights of Hokkaido this time of the year, <b>Yubari Melon</b>. You might have seen precious melons wrapped in delicate paper and their own boxes in fruit shops in Tokyo, selling at tens of thousands of yen per piece. They come from here. You will visit a fruit grading facility in Yubari and witness how this most sought-after fruit in Japan is grown and shipped. After a light lunch, you can try picking your own fruit (and tasting, of course!).</p> <p>Our final destination today is the city of <b>Obihiro</b>, located right in the middle of Hokkaido island. Tonight you will have a "welcome Japan" dinner at the hotel.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Hokkaido Hotel [Western style room]
3	Wed 3/6/2026	Guided tour of Obihiro	<p>Today, you will enjoy visiting a local <b>potato farm</b> that has been in business for over 100 years. Here, you will participate in making potato mochi.</p> <p>After lunch at the farm, your minibus will take you to <b>Manabe Garden</b>, known as Japan's first conifer garden, a botanical garden where all design, landscaping and management happen on-site. You will then head to <b>Tokachi Hill Observatory</b>, a popular spot where you can get a panoramic view of the vast Tokachi Plain. You will also make a quick stop at a local <b>sweet shop</b>.</p> <p>Tonight, your guide will take you to a local popular <b>izakaya</b> restaurant for dinner. Enjoy some unique local dishes and interaction with locals.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Hokkaido Hotel [Western style room]

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4	Thu 4/6/2026	Transfer to and guided tour of Shiraoi and Noboribetsu	<p>Today you will travel in a private minibus from Obihiro to <b>Shiraoi</b>. On this tour, you don't wait long before you get to try one of Japan's most popular foods, <b>wagyu beef</b>. Today, you will have the premium wagyu beef brand called Shiraoi Beef on BBQ at a farm restaurant in Shiraoi.</p> <p>The next stop is the superb <b>National Ainu Museum</b>, which will provide a grand foundation about Hokkaido's history. The museum focuses on the indigenous people of Hokkaido, the Ainu.</p> <p>In the afternoon, you head for <b>Noboribetsu</b> hot springs, which generate some 10,000 tons of hot water a day. Here your guide will take you on the <b>Jigokudani (Hell Valley) Nature Walk</b>, an interesting walk where you can observe intermittently erupting geysers along the path.</p> <p>Tonight's accommodation is a high-class <b>traditional ryokan</b> (Japanese-style inn), where you will enjoy a kaiseki dinner and an onsen. The Japanese hospitality at its best!</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Takinoya [Japanese style room/Japanese & Western room]
5	Fri 5/6/2026	Guided tour of Toyoura and Onuma	<p>This morning is all about scallops, one of Hokkaido's seafood specialties.</p> <p>Your group stop at a little fishing village called <b>Toyoura</b>. A local guide will explain the fascinating story of how <b>scallops</b> grow from a minute egg to the delicious scallop. The morning is complete with a visit to a <b>strawberry farm</b> to taste test Hokkaido's juicy fruit.</p> <p>After lunch, cooked by local ladies, more beautiful Hokkaido scenery as you travel further south and stop at picturesque <b>Onuma Park</b> for a bit of relaxation. It is a quasi-national park with a lake dotted with little islands connected by bridges. Relax among lovely walking tracks, bike trails and sightseeing boats.</p> <p>Tonight's accommodation, an exquisite western-style auberge, will contrast with last night's stay. The hotel offers a superb French-style dinner called "Onuma 50 miles", which uses local vegetables and seafood.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Onuma Tsuruga Auberge Epuy [Twin room]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
6	Sat 6/6/2026	Guided tour of Shikabe and Hakodate	<p>Another of Hokkaido's famous seafoods, <b>kombu</b> (kelp), is on display today. Hokkaido is the biggest producer of kombu, which is used in most dashi soup stock.</p> <p>After visiting a local shrine and a kombu grower's cottage to get the background of this seaweed, you join the fishermen's wives for a <b>cooking lesson</b>. The cooking class is held in a purpose-built modern facility where you will get stuck right into hands-on techniques. The main feature of the cooking lesson is to learn how to make your own kombu dashi together with other typical Japanese dishes like miso soup.</p> <p>Tonight you will travel to the city of <b>Hakodate</b>. This evening is free for you to have some rest after the action-packed few days. But before breaking up, your guide will take you to the top of <b>Mt. Hakodate</b> by gondola for a magnificent view of the port, which is considered to be one of the top three night views of the world!</p>	Breakfast, Lunch	Century Marina Hakodate [Deluxe Twin]
7	Sun 7/6/2026	Guided tour of Hakodate	<p><b>Hakodate</b> is packed with history, a melting pot of cultures and a wonderful place to explore.</p> <p>The first stop is Fort <b>Goryokaku</b>, a massive, star-shaped, Western-style citadel, which was built in the last years of the Edo Period. It was constructed to defend Hokkaido against the Western powers. Hakodate has a unique history as it was one of the first ports that opened to the outside world after the isolation policy of the Edo period, and there has been great influence from Western cultures. Then it is time for Hakodate's famous <b>seafood market</b>, where you will be amazed by the range of fresh seafood available. Lunch today is at the market, where you can pick your favourite taste of Hakodate.</p> <p>Your next activity, a walking guided tour of the <b>Motomachi</b> area, will continue the theme. You will see the multi-cultural aspect of Hakodate in this walk. The last program this afternoon is a visit to a <b>green tea merchant</b> founded in 1937, where you can hear all about how Japanese green tea is produced, processed and brewed.</p> <p>Tonight's dinner is sublime Japanese cuisine at a <b>Michelin-starred restaurant</b>. Enjoy one of the freshest, tastiest and prettiest meals on earth!</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Century Marina Hakodate [Deluxe Twin]

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8	Mon 8/6/2026	Guided tour of Kuromatsunai and Niseko	<p>You travel north today in the private minibus to the town of <b>Kuromatsunai</b>. Here, you take the focus off food temporarily and enjoy the nature of Hokkaido. This small town is known as the northern limit of the beech forest in Japan. This natural treasure has been valued and fiercely protected by locals who have saved it twice from being cut down. You have a guided walk of the forest this morning (about 40 minutes).</p> <p>The lunch today is a BBQ right on the beach, looking over the Sea of Japan. In the afternoon, you head towards <b>Niseko</b> (1 hour drive), well-known for its winter ski fields, where you stay for the night. It is also a prime agricultural region, particularly for the dairy industry. An ice cream stop is called for at this point, and you make a brief stop at Takanashi Dairy Farm and try its famous ice cream!</p> <p>Dinner, Niseko style, is at one of the most popular restaurants among our past guests.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Chalet Ivy Hirafu [Deluxe Twin]
9	Tue 9/6/2026	Guided tour of Yoichi and Otaru	<p>You continue travelling north to the town of <b>Yoichi</b>. Yoichi's biggest claim to fame is perhaps <b>whisky</b>. Today, you can taste a special whiskey at <b>Nikka Distillery</b> that is only available at this venue.</p> <p>The next activity is a fruit-picking of <b>Hokkaido's unique fruits</b>. This farmer's orchard must be the most wonderful 'office' in the world; beautiful sea views in one direction, outstanding mountain views in the other and surrounded by some of the best fruit you've ever tasted! You will have a light lunch at the orchard overlooking this breathtaking scenery.</p> <p>This afternoon, you will transfer to perhaps Hokkaido's most photographed port town of <b>Otaru</b>. Your guide will take you on a guided walking tour of the popular Sakai Street and the canal area. Take photographs, or pop into many craft galleries and sweet shops lining the streets of Otaru.</p> <p>Tonight, you will finally reach a base for the next two nights. After settling into your hotel and having an orientation walk with a guide, dinner tonight is at Naruto, Otaru's famous <b>fried chicken</b> restaurant. People travel from all over Japan to Otaru to experience this crispy chicken. You will wash it down with some local craft beer.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Authent Hotel Otaru [Deluxe Twin]

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10	Wed 10/6/2026	Guided tour of Otaru	<p>The first visit in Otaru today is the <b>Former Aoyama Villa</b>, once the residence of wealthy herring fishermen when Otaru prospered with its herring fishery industry in the 19th century up to the 1950s. The houses built by successful fishermen are called Nishin Goten (herring mansions), and the Former Aoyama Villa is a great specimen of them. The well-preserved Aoyama Villa, which spared no expense in the materials and construction, is a great place to reminisce about how much wealth was made by the herring fishery in its heyday.</p> <p><b>Glass-making</b> is another of Otaru's traditional industries, and today you will try your hand at making your own piece of glassware. Later in the afternoon, it is time to visit a local <b>sake brewer</b> to witness firsthand how this prized alcohol is produced. You will finish the day at a top <b>sushi</b> restaurant in Otaru, which offers another of Otaru's food specialties.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Authent Hotel Otaru [Deluxe Twin]
11	Thu 11/6/2026	Transfer to and guided tour of Sapporo	<p>Today, you get to <b>Sapporo</b>, the capital of Hokkaido Prefecture. On the way, you drop by the <b>Okurayama Ski Jump Stadium</b>. It was one of the competition venues for the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympic Games. From the Okurayama Observation Lounge at 307 m above ground, you enjoy breathtaking panoramas expanding from Sapporo's city centre, including the iconic Odori Park.</p> <p>After having ramen, arguably the most famous dish of Hokkaido, for lunch at the famous Sapporo Ramen Yokocho (the <b>Sapporo Ramen Alley</b>), you have a walking guided tour of historic sites in central Sapporo, which include the former Hokkaido Government Office, the Clock Tower of the former Hokkaido Agricultural College and Odori Park.</p> <p>This evening is free for you to try any of the endless choices of restaurants in Sapporo to suit your taste. Your guide will help you with the selection.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch	JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo [Moderate Twin]

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12	Fri 12/6/2026	Morning guided tour and free afternoon in Sapporo	<p>It is the last day of the tour. This morning, you will visit one of the iconic sites of Sapporo, <b>Hokkaido Shrine</b>. After walking around the vast shrine grounds and having a rest at the nearby tea house for typical Hokkaido sweets, this afternoon is set aside for you to cover off your interests. There are many cultural and historical museums and theme parks to learn more about this unique region, peaceful parks and gardens to stroll in, and some of the best shopping in Japan! Let us know what your interests are, and we will make suggestions.</p> <p>In the evening, you will come together for the last time for a group dinner at a restaurant that offers contemporary dishes using sustainably grown ingredients. Through their meals, you will feel the passion, care and pride of the producers and chefs, well fitting the theme of this tour.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo [Moderate Twin]
13	Sat 13/6/2026	Departure	<p>This morning, after breakfast, the <b>2026 Food Tour of Hokkaido, Japan</b>, will conclude. You can head back to your country by air via the <b>New Chitose Airport</b>, but alternatively, why not linger longer in Hokkaido and Japan? We will be delighted to plan your personal post-tour extension to show you a different part of Japan. Please see our <b>Extension Model Itineraries</b> on the Private Tour page for inspiration!</p>	Breakfast	
Inclusions for Group Tour			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 12 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns)</li> <li>■ All breakfasts</li> <li>■ 8 lunches</li> <li>■ 9 dinners</li> <li>■ Meet and greet on arrival at New Chitose Airport (Sapporo)</li> <li>■ Airport transfer at departure in Sapporo by public transport</li> <li>■ All local transport (private minibus)</li> <li>■ Expert English-speaking tour guides (locally licensed)</li> <li>■ Cultural activities and entry fees included in the itinerary</li> </ul>		

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		Exclusions for Group Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ International and domestic airfare (unless otherwise stated)</li><li>■ Travel insurance</li><li>■ Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages</li><li>■ Personal expenses (laundry, coin-lockers, internet, telephone etc.)</li><li>■ Visa (if required)</li></ul>		