

BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

2028 SNOW SPECTACULAR TOUR OF JAPAN (SIGNATURE)

START: (Refer to website for date) from Tokyo (Haneda)

DURATION: 12 days

PRICE: AUD \$11,760 per person

SINGLE SUPP: AUD \$2,880 per person

FINISH: at Sapporo

GROUP size: 10 people

REF: GWS-28

TOUR OVERVIEW

*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
1	Airport meet and greet on arrival	Arrive at one of Tokyo's international airports, where a friendly Journey to the East representative will meet you and escort you to your comfortable hotel at Haneda Airport. Today is a relaxed arrival day with no group activities, giving you time to unwind after your flight. If you'd like to arrive early and enjoy time in Tokyo - Japan's vibrant capital, brimming with culture, cuisine, and contrast - we'll be delighted to assist with pre-tour arrangements. Rest well tonight and get ready for your unforgettable 2028 Snow Spectacular Tour of Japan, a small-group Japan winter tour showcasing the beauty of Hokkaido's snow festivals, wildlife, and winter landscapes.	No meals	Haneda Excel Hotel Tokyu [Standard Twin]

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
2	Transfer to and guided tour of Hakodate	This morning, take a short domestic flight from Tokyo to the historic port city of Hakodate, your first stop on this Hokkaido winter tour. With its 19th-century streetscapes and distinct European influence, Hakodate exudes an old-world charm rarely found elsewhere in Japan. Once one of only two ports open to foreign trade during Japan's long period of isolation, the city still bears traces of its international past in its unique architecture and atmosphere. Begin your exploration with a visit to the lively Hakodate Morning Market, where stalls brim with fresh seafood and local specialties. Many small eateries offer the chance to savour delicacies like sea urchin, crab, or squid - straight from the nearby waters. Your guided tour continues to Goryokaku Fort, Japan's first Western-style fortification. Designed in the 19th century by samurai Takeda Ayasaburo and inspired by French military engineer Vauban, this star-shaped fortress remains one of Hakodate's most significant historical landmarks. You'll also stroll through the charming Motomachi district, where foreign consulates and elegant hillside churches tell stories of the city's cosmopolitan past. This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner featuring Hakodate's renowned seafood cuisine, the perfect way to toast the beginning of your unforgettable Snow Spectacular Tour of Japan.	Breakfast, Dinner	Century Marina Hakodate [Deluxe Twin]
3	A day of snow activity	Today is all about embracing the magic of winter! After breakfast, set out from Hakodate to a nearby snowfield surrounded by pristine white landscapes. Try your hand at snowshoe walking, an enjoyable and accessible way to explore the snow-covered terrain. As you make your way to the mountaintop, you'll be rewarded with sweeping panoramic views of Hokkaido's winter wonderland. All equipment and clothing are available for rent, ensuring everyone can comfortably join in - no matter your fitness level or experience. In the afternoon, continue your snowy adventure with a range of fun winter activities, including the unique experience of ice fishing on a frozen lake. Feel the peaceful rhythm of the winter countryside as you wait for a bite beneath the crisp northern sky. The evening is yours to enjoy at leisure. After a day filled with snow and laughter, unwind in Hakodate's charming red brick district. Wander through its atmospheric streets, browse local shops for souvenirs, and treat yourself to some of the city's special winter delicacies. You may also like to head up Mount Hakodate for a breathtaking panoramic view of the city all lit up at night, considered one of the top three night views in Japan - a perfect finale to your day in this enchanting port city.	Breakfast, Lunch	Century Marina Hakodate [Deluxe Twin]

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4	Guided tour of Toyoura, Mt Usu and Lake Toya	This morning, you'll bid farewell to Hakodate and travel north toward the serene Lake Toya, one of Hokkaido's most picturesque caldera lakes. Along the way, stop at the charming fishing village of Toyoura, renowned across Japan as a premium scallop producer. Winter is the best season to visit, as scallops are at their peak. A local guide will share the fascinating story of how these prized shellfish grow - from a tiny egg drifting in the sea to the plump, flavorful scallops Toyoura is famous for. Naturally, you'll have the chance to taste these fresh local delicacies right where they're harvested. In the afternoon, ascend Mt Usu by ropeway, a journey of just six minutes that brings you up close to the crater of this active volcano. From the summit's observation deck, take in sweeping panoramic views of Lake Toya and the striking Showa Shinzan, a lava dome dramatically formed by eruptions between 1943 and 1945. You'll then settle into your resort by Lake Toya, where you can relax and soak in onsen bath in the tranquil atmosphere for the next two nights - a perfect base for exploring Hokkaido's natural wonders.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Lake Toya Tsuruga Resort Hikari no Uta [Japanese-Western room with Private Onsen]
5	Guided tour of Shiraoi and Noboribetsu Onsen	This morning, journey to the nearby town of Shiraoi, celebrated for its premium Shiraoi Beef, one of Hokkaido's finest wagyu brands. Shiraoi is also home to the Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park, a cultural complex set amid beautiful natural surroundings. Here, you'll gain a deeper understanding of the Ainu people, the Indigenous inhabitants of Hokkaido, through engaging exhibitions, performances, and hands-on experiences that bring their traditions and way of life to life. After an insightful morning, enjoy a delicious Shiraoi beef lunch at a local family-run restaurant - an authentic and memorable farm-to-table experience. In the afternoon, continue to Noboribetsu Onsen, one of Japan's most famous hot spring resorts, producing over 10,000 tons of mineral-rich water each day. With your guide, explore Jigokudani (Hell Valley), a dramatic volcanic landscape of steaming vents, bubbling pools, and sulphurous streams. This scenic nature walk offers a fascinating glimpse into the region's geothermal power and otherworldly beauty. You'll then return to your resort at Lake Toya, where a relaxing dinner awaits. Unwind in comfort as you reflect on another day filled with culture, nature, and discovery.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Lake Toya Tsuruga Resort Hikari no Uta [Japanese-Western room with Private Onsen]

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
6	Transfer to and guided tour of Otaru	This morning, depart Lake Toya and journey to the picturesque canal town of Otaru, a place where history and charm meet beside the sea. Once a bustling international trading port where Ainu, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian merchants gathered to exchange goods, Otaru still retains the graceful stone and brick architecture of its late 19th-century prosperity. Many of its former warehouses have been beautifully restored and now house boutique shops, museums, and cosy cafés overlooking the scenic canals. Stroll along Otaru's iconic central canal, lined with Victorian-style street lamps and cobblestone walkways, evoking the romance of a bygone era. You'll also visit the former Aoyama Villa, an exquisite residence built by a wealthy herring fisherman during Otaru's boom years - a glimpse into the luxurious lifestyle of the city's fishing magnates. Otaru is equally celebrated for its exceptional sushi, boasting one of the highest concentrations of sushi restaurants in Japan. Enjoy a fresh sushi lunch here, sampling the best of Hokkaido's seafood, before travelling on to Sapporo. This evening is free for you to soak up the lively festival atmosphere, explore the city's winter illuminations, or simply relax and enjoy Sapporo's warm hospitality.	Breakfast, Lunch	Sapporo Grand Hotel [Grand Classic Floor Superior King/Twin]
7	Morning guided tour of Sapporo (Snow Festival)	This morning, enjoy a guided walking tour of Sapporo, the vibrant host city of the internationally renowned Sapporo Snow Festival. Developed in the late 19th century as Japan modernised, Sapporo was designed with wide boulevards, large public parks, and thoughtful urban planning, giving the city its distinctive open and welcoming feel. Today, it is a cosmopolitan city celebrated for its lively food scene, stylish cafés, and fashionable shopping districts. Your guide will take you through central Sapporo, stopping at the historic Clock Tower, built in 1878 as an agricultural college to teach Western farming methods. Wander past other early brick buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries as you make your way to Odori Koen, the 1.5 km-long park that forms the heart of the city. The afternoon and evening are free for you to immerse yourself in the 2028 Sapporo Snow Festival. Marvel at the huge snow sculptures, intricately carved by skilled artists from Japan and around the world. Experience the festival's lively atmosphere with musical performances on ice stages, ice bars serving mulled wine and sake cocktails, and snow activities for all ages. Whether strolling the streets, sampling local delicacies, or enjoying the frosty artistry, Sapporo's winter magic will leave a lasting impression.	Breakfast	Sapporo Grand Hotel [Grand Classic Floor Superior King/Twin]

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8	Transfer to and guided tour of Kushiro	This morning, depart Sapporo and travel east to Kushiro, the gateway to Kushiro Shitsugen National Park, one of Hokkaido's most remarkable natural treasures. This vast wetland was designated a protected area in 1987 to safeguard the red-crowned crane (tancho-zuru), whose numbers were once dwindling. Visiting Kushiro in winter offers a rare opportunity to witness these elegant birds performing their courtship dance in the snow—a truly unforgettable spectacle. At the crane sanctuary, you'll observe these majestic birds in their natural environment and learn about ongoing conservation efforts and breeding programs, gaining insight into the important work that helps preserve Japan's iconic species. Tonight, you'll stay at a small traditional onsen ryokan, where you can experience the warmth of Hokkaido hospitality and the restorative benefits of soothing hot spring baths. Enjoy a relaxed evening surrounded by the peaceful winter landscape - a perfect way to unwind after a day in nature.	Breakfast, Dinner	Yuyado Daiichi [Japanese style room with private toilet, with communal onsen bath - Main Building Maisonette on Mountain side]
9	Guided tour of Shiretoko	This morning, venture further into the wildness of the Notsuke Peninsula, a striking 26 km-long curved sand spit extending into the Nemuro Strait between the Shiretoko and Nemuro Peninsulas. Often described as feeling like the very edge of the land, this narrow peninsula is a haven for wildlife and pristine nature. Keep your eyes open for eagles, foxes, deer, seals, red-crowned cranes, and countless migratory birds, making this a true paradise for nature enthusiasts. After exploring the Notsuke Peninsula, continue to your final destination of today: the UNESCO World Natural Heritage site of the Shiretoko Peninsula. Recognised for its irreplaceable ecosystem and biodiversity, Shiretoko is one of Hokkaido's most spectacular natural regions. On arrival, visit Rausu, a charming coastal town on Shiretoko, to learn about Hokkaido's famous kombu (kelp), the essential ingredient in Japanese dashi soup stock, and enjoy a delicious kombu-based lunch. For the next two nights, you will immerse yourself in the world of ice and sea, experiencing Shiretoko's breathtaking winter landscapes and the unique coastal environment that makes this peninsula so extraordinary.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Kitakobushi Shiretoko Hotel & Resort [Sea View Twin]

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10	Guided tour of Shiretoko	This morning, for those seeking a thrilling winter adventure, you have the option to walk on drift ice along the Shiretoko coast. Participants must meet certain physical conditions - under 110 kg (243 lb) in weight and below 75 years of age - and wear specially designed thick wetsuits. For those who join, it is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience, offering a close encounter with the raw beauty of Hokkaido's wild nature. (N.B. Those who are not doing the drift ice walking will be provided with an alternative activity.) In the afternoon, continue your exploration with a snowshoe walk at the frozen Furepe Falls. Trekking through the crisp snow and gazing up at the cascading ice, framed by the snow-covered Shiretoko mountain range against a brilliant winter sky, is an unforgettable and serene experience. Return to your resort-style accommodation for another relaxing evening. Enjoy a buffet dinner featuring local specialties, followed by a soothing soak in the onsen hot spring bath, letting the warmth and tranquillity of Shiretoko melt away the day's adventures.	Breakfast, Dinner	Kitakobushi Shiretoko Hotel & Resort [Sea View Twin]
11	Abashiri and transfer to Sapporo	This morning, bid farewell to the breathtaking landscapes of Shiretoko as you travel to Memanbetsu Airport for your domestic flight back to Sapporo. Take in the final glimpses of Hokkaido's vast winter scenery as you leave behind its pristine wilderness and wildlife-rich coasts. Back in Sapporo, enjoy a special farewell dinner with your fellow travellers - a wonderful opportunity to reminisce about the unforgettable experiences, friendships, and moments shared throughout your journey across Japan's northern island. It's the perfect way to conclude your Hokkaido winter adventure, celebrating the magic of snow, nature, culture, and cuisine that have made this trip so memorable.	Breakfast, Dinner	Sapporo Grand Hotel [Standard Floor Large Twin / King Double]
12	Departure	After breakfast, your 2028 Snow Spectacular Tour of Japan comes to an end in Sapporo. From here, you may choose to fly or take the train to your next destination, or perhaps extend your stay to further enjoy Hokkaido's enchanting winter landscapes. We would be delighted to assist with any personal travel arrangements, whether that's a flight to Tokyo, an extra night in Hokkaido, or continued travel to another part of Japan. Please speak with one of our friendly travel consultants - we'll be happy to help you design the perfect extension to your unforgettable winter journey.	Breakfast	

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	Inclusions for Group Tour	■ 11 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns) ■ All breakfasts ■ 5 lunches ■ 7 dinners ■ Airport meet & greet and hotel transfer by public transport on arrival ■ Transfer from hotel to airport in Sapporo by public transport on the last day ■ All local transport (train and private minibus) ■ Domestic flights from Tokyo to Hakodate, and from Memanbetsu to Sapporo ■ Expert English-speaking tour guides (Locally licensed) ■ Cultural activities and entry fees included in the itinerary		
	Exclusions for Group Tour	■ International and domestic airfare (unless otherwise stated) ■ Travel insurance ■ Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (except the 1st drink at each meal) ■ Tips and gratuities ■ Transport during free time ■ Personal expenses (laundry, coin-locker, internet, telephone etc.) ■ Visa (if required)		