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## **Hokkaido**

**July 16 – 27, 2012**

**Price:**

**TBA**

**(based on double occupancy)**

### **Tour price includes:**

- Airfare from Honolulu to Hokkaido Roundtrip
- Ground transportation as indicated by itinerary
- Admission as indicated by itinerary
- Daily Breakfast and Seven Dinners
- Hotel Accommodations
- Tour Escort

Tour price based on 80 yen per dollar and 25 tour members. Price may change if yen rate changes by five or more points or if the number of tour members falls below minimum.

July 16 - 17                      Day 1/2                      Monday/Tuesday                      Honolulu/Chitose

We leave Honolulu in the morning on our flight to mainland Japan. Upon arrival the next day, we will clear immigration and customs formalities before connecting to our next flight to Chitose. When we arrive in Hokkaido we will head to our hotel for the night.

July 18                                      DAY 3                                      Wednesday                                      Chitose/Furano/Asahikawa

Today we will head to Asahikawa. Along the way we will stop at Furano, at the foot of the Tokachi mountain range with land that is very fertile and ideal for growing grapes, potatoes, beans, beets and asparagus. At Nakafurano we see potato flowers; then, at the **Tomita Farm**, we see lavender flower fields which are cultivated here and processed into such products as perfume and a delicious lavender ice cream. They also grow poppies and Japanese roses. We will also stop at **Zerubu no Oka** which has lovely gardens. Our last stop will be a visit to the **Trick Art Museum**. Its specialty is art work designed to fool the human eye with paintings that create the illusion of three dimensions.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

July 19                                      DAY 4                                      Thursday                                      Asahikawa

Today we will explore Asahikawa's cultural offerings. Our first stop is the **Asahiyama Zoo**, Japan's most famous zoo. Just ten years ago this zoo was struggling to stay afloat, but after a massive redesign people from all over the country flock to see the animals in their fascinating habitats. The animal habitats were redesigned to better spotlight the animals and give everyone a closer look at their behavior in a more natural environment. From there we would go to the **Hokkaido Dento Bijutsu Kogeimura**. This area is actually home to three museums, the International Dyeing and Weaving Art Museum, the Snow Crystal Museum, and the Yukaraori Folkcraft Museum. The first museum highlights the craft of weaving from around the world focusing on tapestries and clothes created in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Snow Crystal Museum features snow crystals in all manner of objects from its architecture to a variety of crafts. The last museum features the unique Yukara fabric created in Hokkaido. Yukara typically focuses on nature scenes in Hokkaido, such as lavender fields or snow. They are noted for their intricate detail. Closing the day would be a visit to **Kawamura Kaneto Ainu Museum**, featuring handcrafts that seek to preserve the culture of Hokkaido's indigenous people.

Meals: Breakfast

July 20                                      DAY 5                                      Friday                                      Asahikawa/Soya

We journey northward by train for Wakkanai. Upon our arrival we can briefly enjoy the small town with its mix of Russian and Japanese signs. From there we will bus to Soya Peninsula where we will experience ruyhyo or drift ice. During Hokkaido's winter, Soya's waters freeze over creating chunks of ice. You will be able to get a small taste of winter in Northern Hokkaido. You will also see the memorial to the Korean Air jetliner that was shot down by a Russian MIG jet.

Tonight's dinner will be Iroribatayaki. It features a pit in the floor around which you sit and your food is cooked over charcoals in the pit. Their specialties include fresh King Crab, scallops, and local fish.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

July 21                      DAY 6                      Saturday                      Soya /Wakkanai/Panpira Onsen

This morning we drive back to Wakkanai. On the way we may have a chance to look at konbu harvesting. Hokkaido's konbu is considered the best in Japan, which a large portion goes to Okinawa for its high consumption.

We will also stop at **Wakkanai Park** that has a number of memorials, such as the one for Jiro and Taro, a pair of dogs who had been left at the South Pole with the rest of their dog sled team and managed to survive the harsh winter. It also offers beautiful views of the surrounding area.

As we drive down the coast, we may be lucky enough to see Rishiri-Fuji, a large mountain located on Rishiri Island just off the coast. Together with Rebun Island and Sarobetsu, they form the **Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu Park**. We will take a stroll through Sarobetsu, a large marsh field with wild flowers.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

July 22                      DAY 7                      Sunday                      Panpira Onsen/Sapporo

We head south to Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido. Once we arrive in the afternoon, we will check in to our hotel. From there we will go to **Oodori Park** to enjoy the beautiful gardens and maybe try the fresh corn and baked potatoes. Food is at your own expense. You may also browse through the nearby shopping arcade.

Meals: Breakfast

July 23                      DAY 8                      Monday                      Sapporo

For our first stop of the day we will visit the site of the 11<sup>th</sup> Winter Olympics in 1972 and the annual Sapporo Snow Festival, where we can ride the ski lift to the location just above where the skiers launch from. We will also visit the sports museum that has various interactive exhibits to give you a taste of winter sports. From there we head to the **Sapporo Beer Museum**. There you may see the process of making beer as well as the various types of beer that Sapporo makes. Our last stop will be the **Ishiya Chocolate Factory** which is famous for its Shiroyo Koibito or white loved ones, a cookie with two thin wafers with a layer of white chocolate between. It is sold only in Hokkaido. Here they have a factory tour and a chocolate lounge where you can relax and have a chocolate snack.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

July 24

DAY 9

Tuesday

Sapporo – Otaru - Niseko

Today we leave Sapporo for the relaxing town of Kutchan. Along the way we will stop at **Otaru**, a western coastal city whose location was convenient for trade with the Soviet Union and the herring fisheries. We are here to see the **Music Box museum**. At this museum, you will see and hear antique music boxes. At a nearby store, you will be able to buy a music box that plays a song of your choice or design the box itself. Also in Otaru is the **Museo Del'Arte Veneziana**, an imitation of the Glass Palace in Venice. On display are over 20,000 works of glassware with its décor reminiscent of the luxury of Venice. There is even a steam powered clock for us to see. We will also stop at **Kitaichi Glass**, a glassware factory, where you can purchase drip less shoyu bottles.

The last stop of the day is a visit to a **cherry farm** to do a little fruit picking in **Niki**. If there is time, we can stop at a local hardware store.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

July 25

DAY 10

Wednesday

Free day

Today you may spend the day relaxing and enjoying the onsen in your room.

We also offer an optional trip to Yoichi. We take a leisurely ride on a local train to Yoichi. Upon our arrival we will visit **Nikka Whiskey**. Of course, you can sample some of their products for free and buy some to bring home. From here we will do a little shopping before catching the train back to Niseko. This town is also known for its antiques. We will return early enough that you can enjoy the indoor rotenburo.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

July 26

DAY 11

Thursday

Niseko / Hakodate

We continue south as we head to Hakodate. When we arrive in Hakodate we will then take a quick tour of the city. Our first stop will be at the **Konbu Museum**, where we can see the various uses for one of Hokkaido's most important exports. From there we stop at **Goryokaku Park**, Japan's first western-style fort, which was built to defend Ezo. Completed in 1864, it is surrounded by a moat and takes its name from the fort's five-pointed star shape. It is noted for being the last stand of Shogunate forces against Imperial forces during the Meiji Era. Our last stop will be at the **Torapishinu Convent** (Japan's first convent for Catholic Trappist nuns) was established in the 1890s. We stop at this religious community which engages in farming, making handicrafts, and baking their famous cakes and cookies. They also happen to have the best ice cream.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

July 27

DAY 12

Friday

Hakodate/Chitose/ Honolulu

We will check out of the hotel and head to **Hakodate's Morning Market**. This market specializes in fresh seafood from Hokkaido. Crabs in particular are quite large and tasty. You can also find good bargains on dried scallops.

After the market we head for Chitose airport. From there we will catch a flight to mainland Japan, where our last flight to Hawaii awaits us.

Meals: Breakfast