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Let's support Tohoku! "Ganbatte Tohoku!" Explore the less traveled Tohoku Region then enjoy a visit to Hokkaido. Enjoy the onsen hot springs of Tsunagi, Kazuno, Hakodate, and Noboribetsu...a once in a lifetime experience!

10 Nights / 12 Days • 24 Meals (10 Breakfasts, 8 Lunches, 6 Dinners)
Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide
April 13 – 24, 2025 • Tour Manager: Lauren Chu

VISIT: Omiya • Sendai • Matsushima • Rikuzentakata • Hiraizumi • Tsunagi • Kakunodate
Tazawa • Morioka • Oirase • Kazuno • Hirosaki • Hakodate • Noboribetsu • Shiraoi • Sapporo

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: Shinkansen Bullet Train Ride • Zuihoden • Sendai Shopping Area
Matsushima Scenic Cruise • Matsushima Fish Market • Zuiganji Temple • Matsushima Museum
Karan-tei • Iwate Tsunami Memorial Museum • Michi-no-Eki Takata Matsubara
Chusonji Temple • Stroll around Kakunodate • Aoyagi Samurai Manor Museum
Lake Tazawa • Tatsuko Statue • Asabiraki • Tezukuri Mura • Oirase Gorge
Hakkoda Snow Corridor • Hirosaki Castle • Nebuta House Warasse • Hakodate Night View Tour
Hakodate Morning Market • Botanical Gardens (with Onsen Monkeys) • Museum of Northern Peoples
Red Brick Warehouses • Goryokaku Tower • Goryokaku Park • Shikabe Geyser Park • Jigokudani
National Ainu Museum UPOPOY • TV Tower • Clock Tower • Former Government Building
Odori Park • AEON MALL Sapporo Hassamu • Chitose Airport Domestic Terminal Shopping

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES: Sasakama Kan (Hand-grilled Fish Cake) Making
Indigo Dyeing • Local Cooking Class • Ice Cream Making

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CRABS — Pick'em "LIVE" from the tank!
Savor the sweet "freshly steamed" morsels!

* Fares are per person, USD based on double occupancy and include all airline taxes and fees. Airline fuel supplements, taxes and fees are subject to change and tour member is responsible for any increases. Some airline-imposed personal charges, including but not limited to baggage, priority boarding and special seating, may apply. For details visit www.tripadvisor.com/AirlineFees. After initial deposit, a \$75 per person Non-Stop Travel (NST) Cancellation Fee will apply. Group departures may be cancelled, if there are less than 24 tour members. Final payment to NST for "non-cruise" Air and Land Package must be made by money order or personal check. NST does not guarantee that all tour members will fly together with Tour Manager. Tour Manager assignments, number of meals offered on tour, tour price, discount, and the "final" tour itinerary are subject to change with/without notice. **NST reserves the right to correct errors or omissions including but not limited to, fares, fees, and surcharges at any time.** Deposit: \$500 per person. Final Payment Due: 12/04/24. NST at its discretion, may use group and individual photos on its website, print, television, and various social media. Cherry Blossoms are subject to weather conditions and are NOT guaranteed. † Early booking discount is per person. Purchase of NST's complete Air and Land Package is required. †† Earn rewards every time you refer a friend. For each "new-to-NST" customer you refer, both you and your referral can receive a \$25 discount off your next NST escorted group.

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Day 1: Sun, Apr 13 – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #73 at 12:15 pm.

Day 2: Mon, Apr 14 – TOKYO – OMIYA. Arrive at the Haneda International Airport at 3:55 pm. After entry formalities, transfer by coach to your hotel in Omiya. The remainder of the evening is at your leisure. The hotel is conveniently located a five minute walk from the JR Omiya Station, which is one of the largest stations in the Saitama Prefecture. There will be various choices for shopping and dining at the train station. PALACE HOTEL OMIYA (1 Night)

Day 3: Tue, Apr 15 – OMIYA – SENDAI. After breakfast, walk to the Omiya Train Station and depart for Sendai via **Shinkansen Bullet Train**. Upon arrival in Sendai, begin exploring **Zuihoden**, the mausoleum of Date Masamune, one of the most powerful feudal lords of the Edo period. Then, **learn how sasakama kan (hand-grilled fish cake) is made**. Enjoy your grilled fish cakes with lunch. Spend some time in the **Sendai Shopping Area** before transferring to the hotel. HOTEL JAL CITY SENDAI (2 Nights) (B, L, D)

Day 4: Wed, Apr 16 – SENDAI – MATSUSHIMA – SENDAI. After a sumptuous breakfast buffet at hotel depart for a full day of sightseeing to Matsushima. For hundreds of years, Matsushima Bay has been celebrated as one of Japan's three most scenic views alongside Miyajima and Amanohashidate. The bay is dotted by over 200 small islands covered by pine trees. Embark on an unforgettable **sightseeing cruise** before exploring the **Matsushima Fish Market**. Today's lunch includes a special steamed oyster tabehodai. Next, visit **Zuiganji Temple**, one of Tohoku region's most famous and prominent Zen temples. Zuiganji is well known for its beautifully gilded and painted sliding doors. Lastly, visit the **Matsushima Museum**, which houses armor, weapons, tools, and other relics from the feudal times, and the nearby **Kanran-tei**, a momoyama-style tea house for some tea. After returning to the hotel, the remainder of the evening is at your leisure. (B, L)

*Baggage will be sent from Sendai to Morioka, skipping Tsunagi. Prepare an overnight bag for one night.

Day 5: Thur, Apr 17 – SENDAI – RIKUZENTAKATA – HIRAIZUMI – TSUNAGI. We start the day with a stop at **Iwate Tsunami Memorial Museum** to learn about the 2011 tsunami that devastated this area. A stop will be made at **Michi-no-Eki Takata Matsubara**, a roadside station, for a brief break and lunch (on your own). Hiraizumi's most famous attraction, **Chusonji Temple** was established in 850 as a temple of the Tendai Sect of Buddhism. The temple came to prominence when the northern branch of the Fujiwara Clan moved their base to Hiraizumi. At peak, the temple consisted of a large network of dozens of buildings. Enjoy a **soak in the luxurious onsen hot springs** and a gourmet **Kaiseki Dinner**. HOTEL SHION (1 Night) (B, D)

Day 6: Fri, Apr 18 – TSUNAGI – KAKUNODATE – TAZAWA – MORIOKA. Start the day taking a **stroll around Kakunodate** – a former castle town and samurai stronghold. Once housing about 80 families, Kakunodate is one of the best examples of samurai architecture and housing in the country. Visit **Aoyagi Samurai Manor Museum**, one of the best examples of how middle class and wealthy samurai families might have lived. Next, visit **Lake Tazawa (Tazawako)**. A scenic caldera lake that has not been overly developed and retains a natural and rustic atmosphere. At the western end of the lake there is a famous **golden statue of a woman named Tatsuko** that has become a local symbol. According to legend, Tatsuko was a beautiful girl who prayed to retain her beauty forever but was instead cursed and turned into a dragon and eventually sunk to the bottom of Lake Tazawa. After lunch, **learn about sake at Asabiraki**. The evening is at your leisure. Your Tour Guide will have many suggestions for dinner and shopping. HOTEL METROPOLITAN MORIOKA NEW WING (1 Night) (B, L)

*Baggage will be sent from Morioka to Hakodate, skipping Kazuno. Prepare an overnight bag for one night.

Day 7: Sat, Apr 19 – MORIOKA – OIRASE – TOWADA – KAZUNO. Begin the day with a fun hands-on activity at **Tezukuri Mura**, a traditional arts and crafts village, you'll **learn how to dye using indigo**. Oirase Stream is a picturesque mountain stream in Aomori Prefecture that is one of Japan's most famous and popular destinations. The stream flows along the floor of the Oirase Gorge, winding among trees which, while a lush green in spring

and summer, turn brilliant shades of red, yellow and orange from late October through early November. Over a dozen waterfalls cascade down into the stream all along its length from the walls of the gorge. After a **walk around Oirase Gorge**, take a drive through the **Hakkoda Snow Corridor**. It takes two private companies a month to remove the snow from the eight kilometers road between Aomori and Towada – creating the corridor. With some parts of the snow wall reach 10 meters in height. This evening enjoy dinner at your hotel. The **onsen hot springs** – which are divided for men and women – allow you to enjoy the onsen hot springs whether indoors or outdoors. The high-quality service and facilities are sure to become some of your fondest memories of your visit to Japan. OYU ONSEN HOTEL KAZUNO (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 8: Sun, Apr 20 – KAZUNO – HIROSAKI – AOMORI – HAKODATE. This morning we make our way to Hakodate. En route, stop at **Hirosaki Castle**, which was built in 1611 by the Tsugaru Clan. A three-story castle tower, fortified moats, castle gates and some corner turrets (yagura) survive or were reconstructed. Next visit the **Nebuta House Warasse**, an interesting museum dedicated to the city's famous Nebuta Matsuri which is held annually in early August. The museum attempts to capture the spirit of the festival and gives visitors a taste of its lively atmosphere, history and traditions. After lunch at a local restaurant, transfer to Hakodate by **Shinkansen Bullet Train**. To travel between the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido, trains pass through the Seikan Tunnel, the longest seabed tunnel in the world. Upon arrival, stop at a local restaurant for dinner before enjoying a spectacular, **night-view tour of Hakodate**. Don't forget to try out the various onsens at the hotel. HAKODATE KOKUSAI HOTEL (2 Nights) (B, L, D)

Day 9: Mon, Apr 21 – HAKODATE. After breakfast, visit the world famous **Hakodate Morning Sea Market**. View the variety of freshly caught seafood on display. Then visit the **Botanical Gardens**, where you will find rare plants that can only be found in Japan's Southern Islands. There are approximately 300 different species and 3,000 individual specimens on display – including ice cream trees, chewing gum trees, bread trees, and sausage trees! There is also a foot bath available at the entrance of the gardens if you need to rest your tired feet. Don't forget to check out the **onsen bathing macaque monkeys** living next door. After lunch, explore the **Museum of Northern Peoples**. The collection here examines the history and culture of the Ainu, Hokkaido's indigenous people. The clothing and lifestyle artifacts of Ainu and other northern peoples at this museum are some of the oldest samples in Hokkaido. Next spend some free time at the **Red Brick Warehouses**. Renovated in 1909, these buildings now house trendy souvenir and fashion shops, sweet shops, restaurants, and a beer hall. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant before returning to the hotel. (B, L, D)

*Baggage will be sent from Hakodate to Sapporo, skipping Noboribetsu. Prepare an overnight bag for one night.

Day 10: Tue, Apr 22 – HAKODATE – NOBORIBETSU. Start the day by exploring the 107 meter high **Goryokaku Tower**, located in **Goryokaku Park**. Next, visit **Shikabe Geyser Park**, where at approximately 10 minute intervals, the geyser shoots up 500 liters of 100° boiling water 15 meters in the air. Take a **cooking lesson at a local restaurant**, and enjoy the "fruits of your labor" for lunch. After lunch, **learn to make ice cream**, and enjoy your sweet creation. Enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel tonight. Don't forget to try out the **onsen hot springs** after dinner. DAI-ICHI TAKIMOTOKAN SOUTH BUILDING (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 11: Wed, Apr 23 – NOBORIBETSU – SHIRAOI – SAPPORO. Before departing Noboribetsu, visit **Jigokudani** or "Hell Valley," a spectacular, appropriately named valley just above the town, which displays hot steam vents, sulfurous streams and other volcanic activity. It is a main source of Noboribetsu's hot spring waters. Next, explore the **Shiraoi Ainu Museum UPOPOY**. Officially opened on July 12, 2020, the mission of the new National Ainu Museum UPOPOY is "to promote a proper understanding and awareness of Ainu history and culture in Japan and elsewhere out of respect for the dignity of the indigenous Ainu people, while contributing to the creation and development of new aspects of Ainu culture." Learn about the Ainu people and culture via short films shown on the large screen in the 96 seat theater, and through the various artifacts and displays set up in the exhibition rooms located on the 2nd floor of the museum. For lunch, pick out "**LIVE**" crabs from the tanks, to enjoy with a special kaisendon (fresh seafood over rice) lunch. Upon



arrival in Sapporo, get a brief city tour. Drive by the **TV Tower**, the **Clock Tower**, the **Former Government Office Building**, and **Odori Park**. The remainder of the evening is at your leisure. Your Tour Guide will have many suggestions for dinner and shopping. KEIO PLAZA HOTEL SAPPORO (1 Night) (B, L)

*One live crab for every 6th tour member; subject to weather conditions and availability.

Day 12: Thur, Apr 24 – SAPPORO – CHITOSE – TOKYO – HONOLULU. After a late breakfast, depart the hotel for one last shopping stop at **AEON MALL Sapporo Hassamu** before checking in for our flight home. Arrive early at the Chitose Airport and begin exploring the **shopping mall located within the Domestic Terminal**. Consisting of four floors of restaurants, shops and activities, there's something for everyone. Those with a sweet tooth will enjoy the Sweets Zone, where you can enjoy Hokkaido sweets in a spacious and relaxing setting, and the ROYCE' Chocolate World (factory, museum, shop and bakery) and LeTAO Chocolatier. The kids (and those young at heart) will enjoy the Doraemon Sky Park and Hello Kitty Happy Flight, which have an activity area, shop and café (fees may apply) or the Pokémon store. UNIQLO aims to provide customers with "ultimate casual clothes." And there are more than two dozen shops at the airport that specialize in various fresh, frozen or dried seafood that can be eaten there or packed for you to bring home. Depart Chitose Domestic Airport via Japan Airlines flt #518 at 5:00 pm and arrive in the Haneda Domestic Airport at 6:45 pm. Depart Haneda International Airport via Japan Airlines flt #74 at 9:05 pm and arrive in Honolulu at 9:35 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B)

Special Assistance: You must notify NST, at time of reservation, of any disability requiring special attention. NST reserves the right to cancel your booking or terminate your vacation if your special needs or disabilities are not suitable for the vacation or if you are not traveling with a companion who will provide all the assistance you require. **Wheelchair and electric scooter access outside of the USA is severely restricted.** 111924