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2025 SPRING BREAK TOHOKU & HOKKAIDO

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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 Lake Toya... a once in a lifetime experience!

10 Nights / 12 Days • 23 Meals (10 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 6 Dinners)
Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide
March 13 – 24, 2025 • Tour Manager: Jackie Wehrfritz

VISIT: Omiya • Sendai • Matsushima • Rikuzentakata • Hiraizumi
Tsunagi • Kakunodate • Tazawa • Morioka • Oirase • Towada • Kazuno
Hirosaki • Aomori • Hakodate • Lake Toya • Shiraoi • Sapporo • Otaru

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: Shinkansen Bullet Train Ride • Zuihoden • Sendai Shopping Area
Matsushima Scenic Cruise • Matsushima Fish Market • Zuiganji Temple • Matsushima Museum
Karantei • Iwate Tsunami Memorial Museum • Michi-no-Eki Takata Matsubara • Chusonji Temple
Stroll around Kakunodate • Aoyagi Samurai Manor Museum • Lake Tazawa (Tazawako) • Tatsuko Statue
Tezukuri Mura • Asabiraki • Lake Towada • Oirase Gorge • Hirosaki Castle • Nebuta House Warasse
Hakodate Night-View Tour • Hakodate Morning Market • Fort Goryokaku • Goryokaku Tower
Michi-no-Eki YAKUMO • Silo Observatory • National Ainu Museum UPOPOY • TV Tower
Clock Tower • Odori Park • Otaru Canal • Otaru Music Box Museum • Kitaichi Glass Company
AEON MALL SAPPORO HASSAMU • Chitose Airport Domestic Terminal Shopping

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES: Sasakama Kan (Hand-grilled Fish Cake) Making
Indigo Dyeing • Ice Cream Making • Tanaka Sake Brewery Tour and Tasting

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DON'T MISS A THING!!
WHISPER — Wireless Tour Guide System!
English narration directly to your ear!

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Exclusives!**

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

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PACKAGE!**

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10 Nights Hotel, 23 Meals, Tips for Local Tour
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Day 1: Thur, Mar 13 – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #73 at 11:55 am.

Day 2: Fri, Mar 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: Sat, Mar 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 for dinner. HOTEL METROPOLITAN SENDAI (2 Nights) (B, L, D)

Day 4: Sun, Mar 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 **Kanrantei**, a momoyama-style tea house for some tea. After returning to the hotel, the remainder of the evening is at your leisure. (B, L)

Day 5: Mon, Mar 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: Tue, Mar 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. After lunch, 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. In a fun hands-on activity at **Tezukuri Mura**, a traditional arts and crafts village, you'll **learn how to dye using indigo** before transferring to the hotel in Morioka, where the remainder of the day is at your leisure. 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: Wed, Mar 19 – MORIOKA – OIRASE – TOWADA – KAZUNO. Begin the day **learning about sake** at **Asabiraki**. After lunch, visit **Lake Towada**, the largest caldera lake on Honshu, Japan's main island.

It is characterized by two large peninsulas, which extend nearly a third way across the lake. 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. Take a relaxing **walk around Oirase Gorge**. 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: Thur, Mar 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 an izakaya dinner at a local restaurant before enjoying a spectacular **night-view tour of Hakodate**. Don't forget to try out the various **onsens** at the hotel. CENTURY MARINA HAKODATE (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 9: Fri, Mar 21 – HAKODATE – LAKE TOYA. After breakfast, visit the world famous **Hakodate Morning Market**, where a variety of freshly caught seafood will be on display. Visit the **Fort Goryokaku**, a massive, star shaped, Western style citadel, which was built in the last years of the Edo Period for the defense of Hakodate against the imperialist threat posed by the Western powers. After the fort had lost its military importance, it was turned into a public park. Visit the 107 meter high **Goryokaku Tower**, located within the park grounds. Make a stop after lunch at **Michi-no-Eki YAKUMO**, before continuing on to Lake Toya. Enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel. Tonight is the last night to spend time relaxing in the hotel onsen. Don't miss your chance! THE LAKE VIEW TOYA NONOKAZE RESORT SPA RESORT BUILDING (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 10: Sat, Mar 22 – LAKE TOYA – SHIRAOI – SAPPORO. Start the day by taking in the view from the **Silo Observatory** – where you can see panoramic views of Lake Toya, Nakajima Island, Mt. Usu, and Mt. Showa Shinzan. It is one of Japan's leading photography spots. While here, you'll **learn how to make fresh ice cream**. Pick out **"LIVE" crabs*** at Kanigoten to include as part of the special salmon chan chan yaki (miso based grilled whole salmon) lunch. After lunch, learn about Japan's local Ainu population at the **National 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. 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 (2 Nights) (B, L)

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

Day 11: Sun, Mar 23 – SAPPORO – OTARU – SAPPORO. After breakfast, depart Sapporo for Otaru. Take a tour of the **Tanaka Sake Brewery**, learn about sake, how it's made, and enjoy a tasting of sake and other tasty products. Otaru served as a major trade and fishing port in the 1800s. After arriving in Otaru, take a stroll around the **Otaru Canal**. Then stop at the



Otaru Music Box Museum. A visit to the **Kitaichi Glass Company** will delight your eyes with beautiful creations. You'll have ample free time for shopping, exploring the city, and lunch (on your own). Enjoy a BBQ dinner upon arrival back in Sapporo. (B, D)

Day 12: Mon, Mar 24 – SAPPORO – CHITOSE – HONOLULU. After breakfast, depart the hotel for one last shopping stop at **AEON MALL SAPPORO HASSAMU** before checking in for the 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 the Chitose Domestic Airport via Japan Airlines flt #518 at 5:00 pm and arrive at the Haneda Domestic Airport at 6:45 pm. Depart the Haneda International Airport via Japan Airlines flt #74 at 9:00 pm and arrive in Honolulu at 9:00 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.**