



## Off the Beaten Path: A Different Side of Japan

# 2025 ULTIMATE HOKKAIDO, SHIRETOKO PENINSULA & SAPPORO SPRING FESTIVAL

**11 Nights / 13 Days • 28 Meals (11 Breakfasts, 8 Lunches, 9 Dinners)**  
**Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide**  
**May 08 – 20, 2025 • Tour Manager: Danny Loo**

**VISIT:** Chitose • Shiraoi • Noboribetsu • Sapporo • Tokachigawa • Ikeda • Lake Akan  
Shiretoko • Abashiri • Engaru • Sounkyo • Asahikawa • Biei • Furano

**TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:** National Ainu Museum UPOPOY • Indigo Dyeing Experience • Jigokudani  
ROYCE' Cacao and Chocolate Town • TV Tower • Former Government Building • Odori Park  
Clock Tower • Tanuki Koji Shopping Arcade • Sahoro Bear Mountain • Ryugetsu Sweetpia Garden  
Boya Farm Sheep Dog Show • Lake Akan Cruise • Ice Cream Making Experience  
Lake Mashu Observatory • The Road to Heaven Observatory • Oshin Koshin Waterfall  
Shiretoko Goko Lakes • Shiretoko National Park Nature Center • Higashimokoto Pink Moss Park  
Okhotsk Ryuhyo Museum • Abashiri Prison Museum • Kamiyubetsu Tulip Park  
Kurodake Ropeway • Ginga Ryusei Waterfall • Asahikawa Ramen Village  
Otokoyama Sake Brewery Tour and Tasting • Shirohige Waterfall • Blue Pond • Shikisai-No-Oka  
Lilac Festival at Odori Park • AEON MALL • Chitose Airport Domestic Terminal Shopping

### ONSEN HOT SPRINGS:

- **Dai-Ichi Takimotokan (1 Night):** Overlooking Jigokudani ("Hell Valley"), the Grand Bath features five different source springs feeding 35 baths, open 24 hours a day.
- **Tokachigawa Onsen Daiichi Hotel (1 Night):** One of the primeval "moor" onsen hot springs is nicknamed as Bijin-no-Yu, "onsen hot spring of beauty." The amber color in this onsen hot spring is known as a natural body lotion and has been named as a Hokkaido Heritage Site.
- **Akan Yuku no Sato Tsuruga Wings Tower (1 Night):** Enjoy two large and unique outdoor onsen hot springs with stunning views of Lake Akan. Lose yourself as you soak away your physical and mental stress in the rejuvenating onsen hot spring waters.
- **Kitakobushi Shiretoko Hotel & Resort (1 Night):** A large-scale Japanese resort hotel facing the harbor with splendid views of the Sea of Okhotsk from the public bath and the open-air bath on the top floor.
- **Abashiri Tsuruga Hokuten no Oka (1 Night):** On the hilltops overlooking Lake Abashiri, this hotel offers open-air onsen hot spring baths, aromatherapy massages, and unique local cuisine. Rooms include a coffee maker with fresh beans and Ainu-inspired sleepwear.
- **Sounkyo Choyotei (1 Night):** Choose to bathe in the open-air or inside bath, with spring water that is cloudy with the healing minerals and the slight smell of sulfur. Or relax in the open-air bath facing the forested mountain side, as you listen to the sound of the Ishikari River through the trees.

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**Day 1: Thur, May 08** – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #73 at 12:15 pm.

**Day 2: Fri, May 09** – TOKYO – CHITOSE. Arrive in the Haneda International Airport at 3:55 pm. After entry formalities, enjoy a bento box at the domestic departure gate. Depart Haneda Domestic Airport via Japan Airlines flt #527 at 6:40 pm and arrive in the Chitose Domestic Airport at 8:15 pm. Walk to your hotel located within the airport terminal. AIR TERMINAL HOTEL (1 Night) (D)

**Day 3: Sat, May 10** – CHITOSE – SHIRAOI – NOBORIBETSU. After breakfast, depart for Shiraoi. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the museum. Before departing Shiraoi, learn how to **dye using indigo**. This will make a great souvenir of your trip! Visit the main source of Noboribetsu’s hot spring waters, **Jigokudani** or **“Hell Valley,”** a spectacular, appropriately named valley just above the town of Noboribetsu, which displays hot steam vents, sulfurous streams and other volcanic activity. Enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel tonight. Relax in the hotel **onsen hot springs**, before or after dinner. 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. DAI-ICHI TAKIMOTO KAN (1 Night) (B, L, D)

**Day 4: Sun, May 11** – NOBORIBETSU – SAPPORO. Depart Noboribetsu. En route to Sapporo, stop at the new **ROYCE’ Cacao and Chocolate Town** to learn how the famous ROYCE’ chocolate treats are made. Receive a complimentary sample at the end of the tour. For lunch, pick out **“LIVE” crabs** from the tanks, to enjoy with a special kaisen don (fresh seafood over rice) lunch. Upon arrival in Sapporo, get a brief city tour, including the **TV Tower, Former Government Office Building, Odori Park, and Clock Tower**. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. KEIO PLAZA HOTEL SAPPORO (1 Night) (B, L, D)

\*One live crab for every 6<sup>th</sup> tour member; subject to weather conditions and availability.

**Day 5: Mon, May 12** – SAPPORO – TOKACHIGAWA. Depart Sapporo for Tokachigawa. En route, visit **Sahoro Bear Mountain**. The clever viewing facilities include a boardwalk five meters above ground and on the included heavily fortified bus – that looks like it was built for Jurassic Park – cruise the park. The bears seem little fazed by both, and you’re almost guaranteed to see at least one hanging around. After lunch, brief stop will be made at **Ryugetsu Sweetpia Garden**, famous for their gift sets of cookies and pastries. Tonight soak in the **onsen hot spring** and enjoy a seasonal **Kaiseki Dinner** at your hotel. TOKACHIGAWA ONSEN DAIICHI HOTEL (1 Night) (B, L, D)

**Day 6: Tue, May 13** – TOKACHIGAWA – IKEDA – LAKE AKAN. This morning, start the day at **Boya Farm** for a fun-filled **sheep dog show**. After lunch, we’re in for a real treat! The **sightseeing cruise** around **Lake Akan** is Akan’s most popular tour. From the boat you can see the unspoiled primitive forest that shows natural beauty in each season. This evening a special seasonal buffet will be served at your hotel. Enjoy the **onsen hot spring**. AKAN YUKU NO SATO TSURUGA WINGS TOWER (1 Night) (B, L, D)

\*Baggage will be sent from Lake Akan to Souunkyo, skipping Shiretoko and Abashiri. Prepare an overnight bag for two nights.

**Day 7: Wed, May 14** – LAKE AKAN – SHIRETOKO. Begin the day **learning how to make ice cream**. A sweet treat on a warm day. **Lake Mashu Observatory** is famous for its notorious fog, which often hangs over the water for the entire day (a rare phenomenon for a lake), hence its nickname **“Foggy Lake Mashu.”** On the way to **Shiretoko**, check out **“The Road to Heaven”** from the **Observatory**. The **Oshin Koshin Waterfall**, tall and magnificent, is one of the Eight Views of Shiretoko. “Oshinkoshin” translated from the Ainu language is literally “the beautifully forked waterfalls.” Enjoy your buffet dinner and a soak in the **onsen hot spring**. KITAKOBUSHI SHIRETOKO HOTEL & RESORT (1 Night) (B, L, D)

**Day 8: Thur, May 15** – SHIRETOKO – ABASHIRI. The **Shiretoko Goko Lakes** – or Shiretoko Five Lakes – are a set of five small lakes that were formed long ago by the eruption of nearby Mount Io and the underground springs. An 800 meter long elevated wooden boardwalk leads to the first lake, allowing views of the lake and surrounding countryside without damaging the fragile ecosystem. Next, explore the **Shiretoko National Park Nature Center** and learn about one of Japan’s most pristine parks – which is home to 36 land and 22 marine mammals, as well as 285 bird species, including brown bears, Blakiston’s fish owls, and orcas. After lunch, explore **Higashimokoto Pink Moss Park**, a park in Hokkaido that is famous for its beautiful “carpets” of shibazakura (moss phlox). Moss phlox is called “shibazakura” in Japanese, meaning “grass cherry blossoms” because it is like little cherry blossoms blooming on the ground. Shibazakura variety of colors including light pink, red, light purple, and white. Enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel. Relax after dinner at the hotel **onsen hot spring**. ABASHIRI TSURUGA HOKUTEN NO OKA (1 Night) (B, L, D)



**Day 9: Fri, May 16** – ABASHIRI – ENGARU – SOUNKYO. After breakfast, visit the **Okhotsk Ryuhyo Museum** and learn about drift ice. Then visit the **Abashiri Prison Museum** and learn about the conditions the prisoners experienced while incarcerated. After lunch take in the view of fields of blooming tulips at **Kamiyubetsu Tulip Park**. 1.2 million tulips of 120 different kinds! Looking down on the garden from the observation platform on a Dutch windmill, it’s like a dream world. Relax over a sumptuous dinner buffet and a soak in the **onsen hot spring**. SOUNKYO CHOYOTEI (1 Night) (B, L, D)

\*Baggage will be sent from Souunkyo to Sapporo, skipping Asahikawa. Prepare an overnight bag for one night.

**Day 10: Sat, May 17** – SOUNKYO – ASAHIKAWA. After breakfast, take in the view from the **Kurodake Ropeway**. Then visit the nearby **Ginga Ryusei Waterfall**. The word “ginga” means “the Milky Way” and the word “ryusei” means “a shooting star.” Enjoy a local favorite for lunch (on your own) at the **Asahikawa Ramen Village**, where you’ll get to choose the type of ramen lunch you’ll have from one of eight ramen shops. Asahikawa is known for their shoyu-based broths, while Sapporo is known for its miso based broths and Hakodate for its salt based broths. Which one will you try? After lunch, stop at the **Otokoyama Sake Brewery Museum** for a **tour of the facilities** and **tasting of sake and other tasty products**. Arrive at the hotel in Asahikawa. Enjoy free time to explore the hotel and its facilities before leaving the hotel for dinner at a local restaurant. JR INN ASAHIKAWA (1 Night) (B, D)

**Day 11: Sun, May 18** – ASAHIKAWA – BIEI – FURANO – SAPPORO. Start the day at **Shirahige Falls**, a spectacular waterfall situated 600 meters above sea level in the town of Biei, southeast of Asahikawa. White curtains of water cascading through gaps in the cliff give this natural landmark its name, which means “white beard waterfall.” The **Blue Pond**, located outside the hot spring town of Shirogane Onsen, is named after its deep blue color, which it owes to natural minerals dissolved in the water area. Then view the panoramic flower gardens of **Shikisai-no-Oka**, which provide spectacular views across the hills of the Biei. Transfer to Sapporo for the **Lilac Festival at Odori Park**. Begun in 1959, the citizens of Sapporo look forward to this festival as it celebrates the end of the long winter and the coming of spring and warmer weather. Many events, including open-air tea ceremonies, outdoor concerts, a wine garden, and delicious food booths are held amongst the 400 lilac trees adorning Odori Park. The remainder of the evening is at your leisure. KEIO PLAZA HOTEL SAPPORO (2 Nights) (B, L)

**Day 12: Mon, May 19** – SAPPORO. Day at leisure. The perfect day to visit with friends and family. Don’t forget the shopping opportunities at Susukino Shopping Area. Or Tanuki Koji Shopping Arcade, the largest and oldest shopping arcade in Sapporo, which houses over 200 shops. Or the five-story DAISO store. (B)

**Day 13: Tue, May 20** – SAPPORO – CHITOSE – HONOLULU. Enjoy some last minute shopping at an **AEON MALL** before transferring to the Chitose Airport. 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. Or you can relax in the airport onsen or movie theater (for a fee). Depart Chitose Domestic Airport via Japan Airlines flt #518 at 5:00 pm and arrive at the Haneda Domestic Airport at 6:45 pm. Depart Haneda International Airport via Japan Airlines flt #72 at 9:55 pm and arrive in Honolulu at 10:25 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B)

† 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. **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