



Sapporo & Snow Monkeys Tour Dossier

Discovery Tour | 12 Days | Moderate

Tokyo – Nagano – Sapporo – Kyoto

Come face-to-face with the mischievous Japanese Snow Monkeys in the beautiful Alps, before experiencing the world's largest Snow and Ice Festival in Sapporo. There is also time to discover Japan's many treasures-old and new in Tokyo and Kyoto.

Tour Highlights:

Tokyo - Explore Japan's modern, yet traditional capital city

Nagano - Visit the Snow Monkeys relaxing in steaming hot pools

Sapporo - Walk around the Sapporo Snow and Ice Festival as well as the Snow and Light Festival

Kyoto - Enjoy a traditional tea ceremony in Kyoto



Sapporo & Snow Monkeys tour inclusions

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Most meals as stated on the itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides

Personal expenditures e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary are at your own expense.

Discovery Tours

Designed for those who wish to be further immersed in the authentic charm of Asia; our Discovery Tours include more cultural and active experiences. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts/Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience. Our Discovery tours include:

- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

Moderate

'Sapporo & Snow Monkeys' is a **moderate** tour. Tours that require a higher level of fitness and may include standard activities and longer periods of sightseeing. Easy walking, high altitude and overnight train journeys may feature.

- On several days there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time, often involving steps or uneven ground.
- Travelling in Northern Japan in February can be very cold - this tour requires warm clothing. We recommend bringing thermal layers and appropriate footwear for the snow.

Anyone with a good level of fitness should be able to complete this itinerary. Of course, our National Escort/Local Guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. Please refer to your Travel Guide for more information.

Country Profile: Japan

Japan is a fascinating country situated in northeast Asia. It is comprised of more than 4,000 islands - the main four being Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku. The Japanese name for Japan is 'Nippon' or 'Nihon' meaning 'sun origin' and is often translated as 'Land of the Rising Sun'. It is a country of contrasts; engaging a combination of futuristic cities, ancient culture and diverse scenery. Japan is famous for its relatively short Cherry Blossom season.

Itinerary Changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 12 days in duration including international flights. Travellers booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Join the tour on Day 2 in Tokyo and end the tour on Day 11 in Kyoto. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

Important Information Regarding Flight Delays

Due to unforeseen circumstances, flights can be delayed, and therefore connecting flights may be missed. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact our Japan office on **+81 03 6895 8377 (24 hours)** to urgently advise your arrival details have changed. Please ensure you have your trip number, tour name (both included in your final documentation) and new arrival details (flight number and arrival time) handy to pass on to our local office in Japan. This will ensure your National Escort/Local Guide can be informed of your most up to date information and ensure someone is at the airport to meet you on arrival.

If we are not advised of late changes and missed connections, Wendy Wu Tours cannot guarantee someone will be able to meet you upon arrival in Japan as our local office will have no way of knowing which flight you will be arriving on. Wendy Wu Tours will not be responsible for providing reimbursement of transportation costs from the airport to your hotel in the event that our local office was not advised of changes to arrival time.

Sapporo & Snow Monkeys Itinerary

DAYS 1- 2: AUSTRALIA TO TOKYO

Fly overnight with Cathay Pacific Airways to Tokyo, the capital of Japan and transfer approximately 1 and a half hours to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to explore the city until an informal welcome dinner tonight. Group members arriving late in the evening may miss dinner.

Brisbane passengers may depart on Day 2.

Please note: Early check-in is not included today, if your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this please speak to your reservations consultant. . Meals will be at your own discretion until your welcome dinner tonight.

Meals included: Dinner

Destination Information

Tokyo - One of the world's most cutting edge capital cities, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit landscape, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovingly tended gardens. Although long the political and cultural centre of Japan, Tokyo became the official capital when the Meiji Emperor moved it to Tokyo in 1867.

DAY 3: EXPLORE TOKYO

Today you will explore the exciting city of Tokyo. The day begins with a visit to Meiji Shrine, then head across town to Asakusa, Tokyo's old town where you can soak in the atmosphere of the ancient city. Visit Senso-ji, Tokyo's oldest temple and wander down Nakamise, a street that has been providing temple visitors with a variety of traditional, local snacks and tourist souvenirs for centuries. After lunch, take a boat cruise on the Sumida River passing under 12 bridges. Disembark in Hamarikyu garden, an Edo Period Japanese garden surrounded by the Shiodome district's futuristic skyscrapers, a great example of how Japan is the land of contrasts. Lastly visit the Edo-Tokyo

Museum which charts the rise of Tokyo from a small fishing village called Edo through to the thriving metropolis that we see today.

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

Destination Information

Meiji Shrine - A shrine dedicated to the deified spirit of Emperor Meiji and a popular place for traditional Japanese weddings.

Asakusa - The centre of Tokyo's Shitamachi (Old Town) District, where you can get a glimpse of historical Tokyo.

Senso-ji Temple - An ancient Buddhist Temple and the oldest in Tokyo. The temple was originally founded in the 7th century. The temple adorns an image of the Buddhist Goddess Kannon, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo.

Hamarikyu Gardens - A beautiful example of Japanese garden style which sits at the mouth of the Sumida River.

Edo-Tokyo Museum - Learn more about Tokyo's history and culture at the Edo-Tokyo Museum. The museum's permanent exhibition illustrates the Tokyo's past dating back to when it was known as Edo, including Edo Period architecture, cultural heritage, politics and more.

DAY 4: TRAVEL TO NAGANO

Enjoy the morning at leisure in Tokyo. You will be required to check out of your room this morning at the hotel's regular time however your luggage will be stored for you until departing Tokyo this afternoon. Transfer 4 hours by coach to your hotel in the pretty mountain city of Nagano where you will stay for the next two nights.

Meals included: Breakfast and Dinner

Destination Information

Nagano - The host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics, Nagano is the main access point for the Japanese Alps. In the winter, a blanket of snow covers the rural landscape you will travel through to reach this picturesque mountain city.

DAY 5: SNOW MONKEYS

Travel 1 hour to Jigokudani Yaen Koen, home of the famous Japanese Snow Monkeys, where you will walk through the forested valley. From the bus park you will walk between 25 to 35 minutes along snowy paths on an incline, to the main pool where the monkeys bathe. Warm and sturdy footwear is essential. Accustomed to humans, the monkeys can be observed from very close and almost completely ignore their human guests. The afternoon will be spent visiting the historic Zenko-ji Temple, one of the most visited temples in Japan, where you will spend 1-2 hours exploring on foot.

Meals included: Breakfast

Destination Information

Jigokudani Yaen Koen - Home to Japanese Macaques, also known as Snow Monkeys, Jigokudani literally means 'hell's valley' due to the steam and boiling water that bubbles out of small crevices in the frozen ground. It is in the baths of this boiling water that the resident Japanese Macaques like to soak. The monkeys live in large social groups, and it can be quite entertaining to watch their interactions.

Zenko-ji Temple - Founded 1400 years ago, Zenko-ji stores what many believe to be the first Buddhist statue ever brought to Japan. Zenko-ji's main hall has a tunnel in its basement in which visitors are trying to find and touch the 'key to paradise' in complete darkness. The key is attached to the wall and grants enlightenment to anybody who touches it.

DAY 6: FLY TO SAPPORO

Today you will travel 4 and a half hours back to Tokyo for your 90 minute flight to Sapporo. On arrival you will be transferred 1 hour to your hotel for check in and the rest of the day will be at leisure.

Meals included: Breakfast

Destination Information

Sapporo - The capital of Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, Sapporo is known as a winter wonderland after it was introduced to the world during the Winter Olympics which were held in the city in 1972. Sapporo is also one of

the nation's youngest major cities and is famous for the Snow Festival held annually in February.

DAY 7: SAPPORO SNOW AND ICE FESTIVAL

Today your guide will escort you on a tour of Sapporo taking in the highlights of the city and the Snow Festival. Today's sightseeing will be both on foot and taking public transport. Private coaches are not able to travel through the city whilst the festival is in progress. The day will start with a visit to the Tower Clock, an exquisite example of Meiji architecture. You will visit Odori Avenue featuring spectacular snow and ice sculptures, following this, wander on to the nearby district of Susukino where hundreds more ice sculptures are displayed. There will be plenty of free time included for shopping. In the afternoon, transfer to Sapporo Beer Factory where you can take part in optional beer tasting (paid locally). Next door to the beer museum is Sapporo Beer Garden where the group will enjoy a Genghis Khan dinner, a Sapporo specialty of BBQ Lamb (other meats and vegetables will be available for those who do not like lamb but you must advise in advance).

Please note: You will be sightseeing on foot for around 4-5 hours today in cold conditions. Make sure you wear appropriate, sturdy footwear and warm clothing as the temperature will be around -3°C.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

The Tower Clock - The symbol of the city and the Hokkaido Prefectural Office, the Tower Clock was constructed in 1888 in the Neo-Baroque style.

Odori Avenue - At 1.5km long this is the city's main street where the festival's famous large snow sculptures, measuring more than 25 metres wide and 15 metres high are exhibited.

Susukino district - Japan's largest entertainment district north of Tokyo; during the festival you will find hundreds of ice sculptures on display here.

Sapporo Beer Factory - Sapporo Beer, one of the oldest and most popular beer brands in the country, has been brewed in Sapporo since 1877. A former brewery from that time now hosts the Sapporo Beer Museum. Optional beer tasting will incur a small fee payable locally.

DAY 8: OTARU SNOW AND LIGHT FESTIVAL

In the morning, you will visit the Okurayama Viewing Point, where you'll rise by a 5 minute chair lift ride to the top of the Sapporo Winter Olympics Ski Jump and enjoy the breath taking views of the surrounding mountains. This afternoon will include a visit to the pretty port town of Otaru where you will stroll along the canal, enjoy some of Japan's best sushi and soak up the atmosphere of the Snow Light Path Festival. Otaru is approximately a 40 minute drive from Sapporo, you will travel there by public bus with your guide and then explore the festival on foot.

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

Destination Information

Okurayama Viewing Point - This viewpoint sits at the top of the 1972 Winter Olympic ski jump, which is still home to many international competitions. From the top, you will enjoy stunning panoramic views of Sapporo and Ishikari Bay.

Otaru - In February, the Snow Light Path Festival takes place in this enchanting town. The local people create lanterns from the snow, you will experience over 100,000 candles lighting up the streets and the canal as you soak up the magical atmosphere.

DAY 9: KYOTO TEA CEREMONY

This morning you will be transferred to Shin Chitose Airport where you will board a 2 hour and 20 minute flight for Osaka Airport. On arrival, you will be met by a coach and taken to experience a true tea ceremony in a Kyoto tearoom before continuing on to your hotel for check in. The journey time from the airport to Kyoto will be approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. This afternoon take part in a traditional tea ceremony.

Meals included: Breakfast

Destination Information

Kyoto - This culturally diverse city was the ancient capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years until 1867. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

DAY 10: EXPLORE KYOTO

Today will be spent exploring and experiencing the beauty of the Ancient capital, Kyoto. You will be transported by private coach around the city and explore each site on foot. You will be walking for approximately 4-5 hours. Starting with the Kinkakuji Temple, known as the Golden Pavillion,

one of Kyoto's most famous temples. You will also visit Nijo Castle, an ornamental castle, take a walk down Nishiki Market known as 'Kyoto's Kitchen' and end your sightseeing with a visit to Sanjusangendo Temple. Gather tonight for a farewell dinner at a restaurant within walking distance to your hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Kinkaku-ji Temple - A Zen temple known as the Golden Pavilion as the top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf. The temple was once the retirement villa of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. This is Kyoto's most popular tourist attraction so there are often many tourists here.

Nijo Castle - Built by the founder of the Edo Shogunate as his Kyoto residence, Nijo Castle is surrounded by stunning gardens. The main building was completed in 1603, and is famous for its architecture, decorated sliding doors and 'chirping' nightingale floors.

Nishiki Market - A narrow, five block long shopping street lined by more than one hundred shops and restaurants; this lively retail market specialises in all things food related, like fresh seafood, produce, knives and cookware. It is a great place to find seasonal foods and Kyoto specialties, such as Japanese sweets, pickles, dried seafood and sushi.

Sanjusangendo - A temple which is Japan's longest wooden structure (120m), Sanjusangendo is famous for its 1001 statues of Kannon, the goddess of mercy.

DAY 11: DEPART KYOTO

This morning is free at leisure before you transfer to Kansai Airport (Osaka) for your return flight home.

Due to flight schedules, Perth passengers may arrive home on Day 13.

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late checkout is not included in our Essential Japan tour. If you wish to book a late checkout for your final day in Kyoto, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast

DAY 12: ARRIVE AUSTRALIA

Arrive home today.

SAPPORO & THE SNOW MONKEYS TRAVEL INFORMATION

Visas

Passports must be valid for six months beyond the length of stay. Visas are not required for Australian passport holders for entry into Japan for stays of up to 90 days.

Insurance

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.

Eating in Japan

Japanese cuisine is delicious, colourful and healthy. Meals are usually served with a bowl of rice and a bowl of miso soup and consist usually of fish, pickled vegetables and meat. Japan's other main staple is noodles, most famous being Udon and Soba. Most meals (excluding drinks) are included in our Discovery group tours. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout Japan. Food is an important element of Japanese culture. It is a time for families and friends to come together and much of family life revolves around the dinner table. Most food is eaten with chopsticks so best get practicing as cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

Breakfast will be buffet style. Lunches are mostly pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. Dinner is usually buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high quality Japanese and Western dishes. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. These are also pre-booked in advance prior to your arrival by your guides. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes. All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available.

On some days where many sights are covered, dinner times may be early and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing without stopping at your hotel to freshen up.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Japan. Please note that in Japan hotel rooms are renowned for being small and rooms booked for single use are usually smaller than a standard double or twin room, contain one small double bed (or one single bed), and are designed for one person to use. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Hotels in Japan often do not have porters and you will be required to carry your own luggage. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty please speak to your National Escort. Tea and coffee facilities are not always available in hotels in Japan, so bring your own supply of coffee and tea bags.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth with the rest of Asia.

Trains: Japan's transport system is well known for being efficient, clean and convenient. We like to make sure that you get the opportunity to travel with the locals, making use of the city's world-renowned bullet trains that will whizz you from city to city in no time. When taking the bullet train (Shinkansen) your main luggage will be transported separately due to limited space on the train. We recommend you pack a small overnight bag to take with you on the bullet train, which includes a change of clothes and other necessary items including any medication that is required.

Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in Japan and therefore the local people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason, some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort/Local Guides.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Development in Japan

Japan is a developed country and as such matches the west in modernity and technological advances. Japan is an extremely safe country and takes great responsibility in maintaining high safety standards.

Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a National Escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

Tipping Policy

Tipping is not a practiced custom in Japan. For this reason, tipping is not compulsory or included in the price of our Japan group tours. If you feel your National Escort/Local Guide has provided excellent service, you may (at your own discretion and expense) provide them with a tip at the end of your tour. When travelling around Japan, you should resist the temptation to let someone 'keep the change' or to tip wait staff, bar staff, taxi drivers or bellboys as this may lead to confusion.

Packing List and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on www.weather.com.

Luggage

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Tokyo. US Dollars and Australian Dollars can be exchanged at Narita Airport and in some hotels, provided the Australian currency is new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be very limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of AUD\$350 should be sufficient; however for those that cannot resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional tours may be offered in each city you visit during your tour at an additional cost. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide.

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

Cultural Differences

Japanese society and culture is built on intricate social etiquette and customs. As foreigners, we are not expected to be knowledgeable about all etiquette, but it will make your time in Japan more enjoyable if you are respectful of local customs. Some examples of scenarios you may encounter include removing your shoes and hats when entering a temple or house (some restaurants as well). You may be supplied with slippers at some places, but please come prepared with plenty of clean socks with no holes, and shoes that are easy to take off for the fairly regular occasions when they must be removed. Your National Escort will advise you of some of these other customs at the beginning of your tour.

Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travolvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travolvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travolvax.com.au.

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice with deposit documentation via email.

After your booking

This includes important information and links to access the visa application form and instructions sheet online (if applicable). Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

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