



Northern Japan: Secrets of Hokkaido

Go Beyond Tour | 14 Days | Physical Level 1

SAPPORO – FURANO – MOUNT ASAHIDAKE – LAKE AKAN - LAKE KUSSHARO -
SHIRETOKO - SOUNKYO - SAPPORO

Japan's northern island of Hokkaido reveals a striking harmony of culture and wide-open landscapes. Discover indigenous Ainu heritage, gaze across dramatic lakes, and unwind in steaming hot spring baths. From rolling flower fields to wild national parks and pristine coastlines, this journey through Hokkaido's vast and elemental beauty offers a refreshing glimpse of Japan at its most expansive and serene.

- Take a bear-spotting cruise along the Shiretoko Peninsula
- Paddle through Japan's largest wetland
- Learn about indigenous Ainu culture at Lake Akan
- Take a cable car up Mount Asahidake for sweeping alpine views
- Visit one of Hokkaido's renowned dairy farms
- Taste lavender ice cream in Biei's rolling flower fields

TOUR MAP



NORTHERN JAPAN: SECRETS OF HOKKAIDO TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land-only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as per the itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more guests) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditures e.g. drinks, optional excursions, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check-in or late check-out, and other items not specified on the itinerary.

GO BEYOND TOURS:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

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

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

'Northern Japan: Secrets of Hokkaido' falls under a Physical Level 1 category. This indicates a level of fitness that allows you to comfortably remain on your feet with occasional rest. Expect to effortlessly navigate boarding and disembarking from various modes of transport, including coaches, trains, and boats. You will be walking around remarkable sites and ascending steps to capture those awe-inspiring views!

Please Consider:

Sightseeing may often involve walking for a reasonable duration, sometimes over multiple steps, or uneven surfaces. **Below are some examples of more difficult terrain included in this tour.**

- **Day 6:** Mount Asahidake requires a gentle walk of around 1 hour on natural trails, which may include uneven surfaces and some inclines. Good boots are recommended. If you do not wish to take the cable car, you will miss the walks at these sites. You may need to wait 1-1.5 hours for the group to return.
- **Day 7:** This tour includes beginner-friendly canoeing at Kushiro Marsh (sit-on-top, Canadian-style canoes). Although the waters are calm, you should be able to board the canoe independently. There will be a guide in each canoe.
- **Day 8:** The walking at Mount Ito and on the shores of Lake Kussharo is short, but includes some uneven ground and natural terrain.
- **Day 10:** Two round-trip walks and a coastal cruise:
 - The first walk (Furepe Waterfall; one hour) includes a steeper section at the beginning of the trail, which may be more slippery after rain.
 - The second walk (Shiretoko Goko Lakes; 30-40 minutes) is on a raised boardwalk, with a few steps and stairs.
 - Round-trip bear-spotting cruise (Shiretoko Peninsula; two hours) You will need to be able to board the boat and move about without assistance. The cruise time may be extended, depending on wildlife sightings.

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour. They are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travellers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 14 days in duration including overnight international flights in both directions as this is the most likely flight option from Australia. Please note, some flights may depart and arrive on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours. Please email your international flight times to info@wendywutours.com.au so we can arrange your transfers accordingly.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Sapporo and end the tour on Day 13 in Sapporo. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions regarding your departure. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2 of the itinerary. If you miss this due to your arrival time, all information will be provided to you at breakfast the following morning.

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 while maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY**Day 1-2: Arrive Sapporo**

Meals: D



Fly overnight to the laidback city of Sapporo, the gateway to Hokkaido. Transfer to the hotel. Depending on your time of arrival, the rest of the day is yours to start soaking up the local atmosphere before tonight's welcome dinner.

Please note: Early check-in (before 3pm) is not included. If your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this, please speak to your reservations consultant. For luggage storage

options prior to check-in, please speak to your hotel reception desk.

Destination Information

Hokkaido – Hokkaido is Japan's second-largest island – roughly twice the size of Switzerland – yet it is home to only 4% of Japan's population. It was annexed by Japan in 1869, following the Meiji Restoration (the return of power to the hands of the Emperor). Its annexation was intended to provide Japan with a buffer against Russian expansion.

Sapporo – The capital of Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, Sapporo took its place on the world map after hosting the Winter Olympics of 1972. One of Japan's youngest major cities, it is also famous for its beer and annual snow festival.

Day 3: Historic Sapporo: Architecture, Beer & Ramen

Meals: B, L



Begin your full-day tour of Sapporo, exploring how this vibrant city became the foremost city of Hokkaido. Step back into Hokkaido's early days at the Historical Village, an open-air museum of preserved buildings that bring the region's frontier past to life.

Return to the city centre for lunch. Later, visit the iconic Sapporo Clock Tower and enjoy a stroll through Odori Park. This afternoon, visit the Sapporo Beer Museum to learn about Japan's

oldest beer brand, and enjoy a tasting!

Come evening, head to 'Ramen Alley', where your guide will introduce you to a Sapporo speciality – rich, hearty miso ramen. Choose your own dish from a selection of stalls – your guide will be on hand to help with questions!

Destination Information

Hokkaido Historical Village – An open-air architectural park, offering a glimpse into early settler life. Admire relocated buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries– from family homes to local schools, shops and more.

Odori Park – Stretching through the heart of Sapporo, this mile-long park offers open green spaces, seasonal flowers and views of the city’s iconic TV Tower.

Sapporo Beer Museum – Housed in a historic red-brick building, this museum traces the origins of Japan’s oldest beer brand, with exhibits on brewing history and the opportunity to sample a range of Sapporo beers.

Ganso Ramen Yokocho – A narrow alley in Sapporo’s Susukino district, lined with small ramen shops serving the city’s famous miso ramen since the 1950s.

Day 4: Olympic Museum & Otaru

Meals: B, D



Discover the event that put Sapporo on the map with a visit to the Okurayama Ski Jump, built for the 1972 Winter Olympics. Explore the interactive Olympic Museum for insight into winter sports history – why not try virtual skiing, sit in a bobsleigh, or admire the displays of historic athletes’ uniforms?

Later, travel to the charming canal town of Otaru, known for its preserved warehouses and maritime heritage. Enjoy free time for lunch and to explore, then return to Sapporo to relax before dinner.

Destination Information

Okurayama Viewpoint – The Okurayama Viewpoint sits at the top of the 1972 Winter Olympic ski jump, which is still home to many international competitions. From the top, you can enjoy panoramic views of Sapporo and Ishikari Bay.

Otaru – Otaru is a small harbour city northwest of Sapporo. Its beautifully preserved canal area gives Otaru’s city centre a distinctive character, reminiscent of past decades. It was once a hub for fishing and international trade, hence the many old warehouses dotted near the water.

Day 5: Furano & Biei: Flower Fields, Winery & Blue Pond

Meals: B, L, D



Enjoy a scenic morning drive through the countryside to Furano, a region known for its rural charm and seasonal beauty. Visit the picturesque Shikisai-no-Oka, where vibrant flower fields of lavender and other seasonal blooms create a colourful patchwork landscape. Your guide will treat you to a local speciality – lavender ice cream!

Continue to Domaine Raison for a winery visit and lunch. Later, stop at the striking Blue Pond before heading to your hotel. After check-in, unwind in the onsen or take some time to relax in your room before dinner.

Destination Information

Shikisai-no-Oka – A panoramic flower garden in Biei, where rolling hills are planted with vibrant seasonal blooms, from lavender to sunflowers, creating a colourful patchwork landscape.

Blue Pond – A striking natural pool near Biei, known for its vivid blue colour, caused by natural minerals in the water, with submerged tree trunks adding to its surreal appearance.

Domaine Raison – A family-run, eco-conscious winery in Furano, where grapes are grown and produced on site, offering insight into the region's cool-climate winemaking and rural heritage.

Day 6: Mount Asahidake & Daisetsuzan National Park

Meals: B, D



Drive approximately one hour to Mount Asahidake, the highest peak in Hokkaido at 2,291 metres. Ascend by ropeway (cable car) into the stunning landscapes of Daisetsuzan National Park.

From Sugatami Station (elevation 1,600 metres), enjoy a relaxed walk of around one hour, taking in alpine scenery, volcanic terrain and seasonal flowers. Afterwards, visit the Asahidake Visitor Centre to learn more about the area's unique environment and wildlife.

Later, visit the Otokoyama Sake Brewery Museum, where you can admire displays and enjoy a tasting of this local rice wine.

Return to your hotel in Furano, where you can relax and enjoy the onsen before dinner at the hotel.

Destination Information

Mount Asahidake – The highest peak in Hokkaido, located within Daisetsuzan National Park, known for its dramatic volcanic landscapes, steaming vents and seasonal alpine scenery.

Asahidake Ropeway – A scenic cable car (gondola) that ascends into the mountains, offering panoramic views and access to alpine walking trails around the 5th station.

Otokoyama Sake Brewery Museum – A historic brewery showcasing traditional sake-making methods, with exhibits on the region's brewing heritage and the opportunity to sample locally produced sake. The sake here is brewed using pristine waters from Daisetsuzan National Park.

Day 7: Kushiro Marsh Canoeing, Lake Akan & Ainu Show

Meals: B, D



Drive eastward across Hokkaido to reach Kushiro Marsh, the largest wetland in Japan, where you can enjoy a leisurely canoeing experience suitable for all levels of experience. Gliding quietly through the marsh, keep an eye out for a variety of local birds. Lucky visitors may even spot a rare Tancho (red-crowned crane), which stands around five feet tall.

Later, enjoy some free time for lunch near Kushiro before driving north towards Lake Akan.

Enjoy some time to relax or visit the hotel onsen before dinner.

Tonight, enjoy a deeply local experience: an Ainu dance performance telling the story of the 'Lost Kamuy'. Beforehand, enjoy a private talk from a member of the local Ainu community, who will introduce you to their fascinating and deeply spiritual culture.

Destination Information

Kushiro Wetland & National Park – Japan's largest wetland, covering over 180 square kilometres, this protected area is home to rich birdlife, including the rare red-crowned crane.

Ainu – The indigenous people of Hokkaido, with a history dating back thousands of years. Traditionally hunter-gatherers, they lived in close connection with nature and developed a distinct culture, language and belief system. From the late 19th century, their way of life was heavily restricted as Hokkaido was settled, but today there are ongoing efforts to preserve and revive Ainu traditions and identity.

'The Lost Kamuy' – Ainu dance is a UNESCO-listed art form that is integral to Ainu culture. Here, it has been fused with digital art to create an immersive space in which the Ainu perform stories of harmony between people and the local spirits.

Day 8: Lake Akan & Lake Kussharo

Meals: B, L, D



Take a cruise on the fascinating Lake Akan, in the heart of Akan Mashu National Park. Stop on a small island in the lake to see an exhibition of the lake's quirky 'marimo'—spherical moss balls that twirl and bounce along the lakebed. Head back to shore and take a stroll in the Ainu Kotan Village before lunch.

This afternoon, drive to Lake Kussharo, stopping en route at Mount Io, a sulphurous mountain with powerful, steaming vents that hint at its volcanic nature. If you like, you can experience your own 'foot onsen' by digging into the sand to reveal the bubbling warm water below. Soak your feet and enjoy the warmth of the geothermal water. Continue to your hotel in Lake Kussharo.

Destination Information

Lake Akan — A volcanic caldera lake within Akan Mashu National Park, covering around five square miles, known for its clear waters and the rare marimo moss balls.

Lake Kussharo — Japan's largest caldera lake, covering around 30 square miles, set within Akan Mashu National Park. Surrounded by volcanic terrain, it is known for its tranquil setting and natural hot springs along the shoreline, where warm water bubbles beneath the sand.

Day 9: 'Sea of Clouds' - Dairy Farm - Shiretoko

Meals: B, L, D



Today, take an early morning start and drive 20 minutes to Tsubetsu Observatory, where you can watch the mysterious 'Sea of Clouds' roll over Lake Kussharo as the sun rises. Sip a cup of coffee as the almost ethereal mist slips over the water's surface. Head back to the hotel for breakfast.

Later, head to a large local dairy farm to learn all about Hokkaido's famous milk. Explore the grasslands where the farms' cows graze, enjoy a milking demonstration, and even a tasting. Try your hand at making butter and sample your creation!

Later, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before driving 2 hours to Utoro. This small coastal town is one of the most northeastern settlements in Hokkaido, and is the gateway to Shiretoko National Park. Enjoy some time to relax or use the hotel onsen before dinner.

Please note: The Sea of Clouds is weather-dependent and may require an approximately 5 a.m. start. Your guide will advise exact times locally. The group will return to the hotel, so if you do not wish for an early morning start, it is possible to forego this and rejoin the group later.

Destination Information

Sea of Clouds – A natural phenomenon seen at sunrise around Lake Kussharo, where a layer of mist forms over the landscape, creating the illusion of a vast sea of clouds rolling across the hills and lake below.

Hokkaido Dairy – Renowned across Japan for their high-quality milk, Hokkaido's dairy cows benefit from the island's cool climate, pure air, and wide open pastures. The rich Hokkaido milk is used to produce a range of fresh products, from cheese and butter to 'milk jam' and sablé biscuits, making it a key part of the region's food culture.

Utoro – A small coastal town on the Shiretoko Peninsula, Utoro serves as the main gateway to Shiretoko National Park. Overlooking the Sea of Okhotsk, it is a base for exploring the region's rugged coastline.

Day 10: Shiretoko Peninsula by Land & Sea

Meals: B, D

Enjoy a relaxed stroll to Furepe Waterfall (one-hour round trip on natural terrain). From here, admire the view of the cliffs and blue Okhotsk Sea.

Later, drive to Shiretoko Goko Lakes. Here, follow an elevated boardwalk through the fields to admire views of the mountains. If you are lucky, you may see Ezo deer or foxes from this vantage point.



After lunch, take a two-hour bear-spotting cruise from Utoro to Rusha Bay in search of the Ussuri brown bears, who hunt and fish along this wild coastline. As with all wildlife, sightings cannot be guaranteed. Binoculars are recommended for the best view of these beautiful creatures; a small number can be hired from the boat.

Destination Information

Furepe Waterfall – Also known as the 'Maiden's Tears', this unique waterfall seeps through the cliff face and empties into the Sea of Okhotsk. Reached by a 30-minute walk through woods and grassland, it offers sweeping views of Shiretoko's rugged coastline.

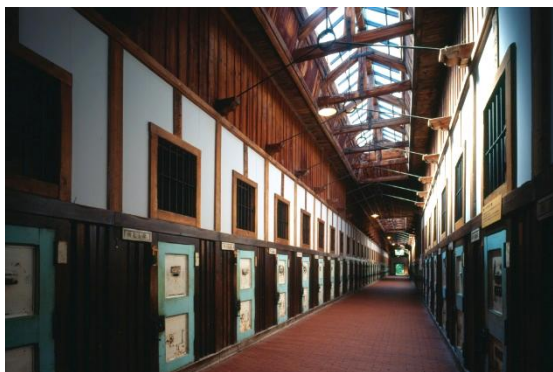
Goko Lakes – A group of small lakes set within Shiretoko National Park, known for their reflections of the surrounding mountains and forests. An elevated boardwalk allows for easy access to one of the main lakes, with opportunities to spot wildlife such as foxes and Ezo deer.

Rusha Bay – A remote inlet along the Shiretoko Peninsula, accessible only by boat, known for its rugged cliffs, waterfalls and wild brown bears that hunt fish along the shoreline.

Ussuri Brown Bears (Ezo bears) – Among the largest bears in the world, this subspecies of brown bear is native to Hokkaido and Russia. In Hokkaido, they typically grow to 200-300 kilos.

Day 11: Museums of Abashiri – Kitami Mint Heritage - Sounkyo

Meals: B, L, D



Depart Shiretoko and travel to Abashiri, where you will explore two of the region's most important museums.

Visit the Abashiri Prison Museum, an open-air site that brings to life Japan's Meiji-era penal system and the role of convict labour in the development of Hokkaido.

Continue to the Museum of Northern Peoples to learn about the cultures and traditions of Hokkaido's indigenous Ainu and other communities.

After lunch, travel to Kitami to visit a mint museum and distillation facility. At its peak, Kitami produced around 70% of the world's mint oil, before the industry declined during and after the war years. Learn about the production process and the town's industrial heritage, and taste mint ice cream at a local shop before continuing your hotel in Sounkyo.

Destination Information

Abashiri Prison Museum – An open-air museum on the site of a former prison, illustrating Japan's Meiji-era penal system and the use of convict labour in developing Hokkaido through preserved buildings and exhibits.

Museum of Northern Peoples – A cultural museum showcasing the traditions of indigenous communities from Hokkaido and other northern regions, with exhibits on daily life, clothing and survival in cold climates.

Kitami Mint Memorial Museum – A small museum dedicated to the region's mint industry, which once produced around 70% of the world's mint oil. Exhibits explore the cultivation and distillation process.

Sounkyo Gorge – A dramatic river valley within the north of Daisetsuzan National Park, known for its towering cliffs, forested slopes and seasonal scenery. It enjoys some of Japan's earliest autumn leaves from around the end of September.

Day 12: Sounkyo Gorge – Mt Kurodake – Kita Craft Village – Sapporo Meals: B, L, D



Begin the day at Mount Kurodake, which towers above Sounkyo Gorge in the northern end of Daisetsuzan National Park. Ascend by cable car to the 5th station, where you can take in sweeping views before enjoying a short forest walk of around one hour.

After lunch, continue to Kita-no-Arashiyama, a charming craft village, with free time to browse the studios and small shops for locally-made crafts and souvenirs. Different studios are open each day, selling ceramics, woodcrafts, and glassware.

Later, return to Sapporo ahead of this evening's farewell dinner.

Destination Information

Mount Kurodake – Rising to 1,984 metres in Daisetsuzan National Park, this mountain is accessed by cable car and offers sweeping alpine views, with seasonal highlights including summer wildflowers and early autumn foliage.

Kita-no-Arashiyama – A small craft village on the outskirts of Asahikawa, known for its artisan studios producing ceramics, glassware and more. Artists first set up kilns here in the 1960s, attracted by the high-quality clay of this region.

Days 13-14: Depart Sapporo Meals: B



This morning is free at leisure before transferring to the airport for your return flight home. Please note that only breakfast is included today.

PLEASE INFORM OUR RESERVATIONS TEAM OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS AT TIME OF BOOKING.

NORTHERN JAPAN: SECRETS OF HOKKAIDO TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia. Visas are not required for Australian passport holders for entry into Japan for stays of up to 90 days.

INSURANCE:

It is a condition of your booking that you are insured for the duration of your trip. We recommend comprehensive travel insurance to cover cancellation, medical requirements, luggage, repatriations and additional expenses. At a minimum, the policy is required to cover medical requirements including medical evacuations / repatriations. The choice of insurer is yours. We strongly suggest you purchase insurance at the time you pay your deposit. This is because cancellation fees and charges are payable from that time.

We may request you to provide evidence that you have taken out and paid for a policy to comply with this condition. If you fail to provide a certificate of currency of insurance within a reasonable time after our request, then this will be deemed a cancellation by you and standard cancellation fees will apply.

EATING IN JAPAN:

For Go Beyond tours, most meals are included (excluding drinks). Please see your day-to-day itinerary for details on which meals are included.

On all Group tours, Extensions and Pre & Post Stays, no refund will be given for any meals missed due to your flight timings, or personal choice.

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. In Hokkaido, meals may be particularly traditional.

Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes; their individual flavours as well as 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 – Western cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

Breakfast will mostly be buffet-style but may be a set menu. 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, but may occasionally be a set menu. 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 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.

Please note: if you have any dietary requirements, you **must** inform us before your tour starts, and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. We cannot accommodate dietary requirements or allergies which are not notified to us in writing in advance.

Gluten-free food in particular may not be as readily available as in your home country. Gluten is usually present in soy sauce, a common ingredient in Japanese cooking. In addition, **veganism** is not widely understood in Japan. Please give our Operations team a call to discuss your needs in advance of departure.

The 'Northern Japan: Secrets of Hokkaido' tour includes a visit to a dairy farm, with a butter-making experience using milk and cream. Please note that due to the remote nature of the area, lactose-free substitutes are not available for this experience.

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. Please note, double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

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 will exist between your home country and Japan.

Please note that in Japan, hotel rooms and bathrooms are renowned for being small. Standard single rooms are usually smaller than a standard double or twin room, containing one small double bed (or one single bed), and are designed for one person to use.

All group tour hotels have private modern bathroom facilities, air conditioning and a TV unless otherwise specified in the itinerary. 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.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portorage is not included on our tours in Japan. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

TRANSFERS:

The 'Northern Japan: Secrets of Hokkaido' tour includes round-trip transfers. You will be met on arrival by English-speaking staff and transferred to your hotel by direct shared bus (shared with other passengers, not just Wendy Wu Tours clients). You will meet your national escort at the welcome dinner or, if arriving late, the following morning after breakfast at the welcome meeting.

Please ensure your Wendy Wu Tours luggage tag is visible on your suitcase/hand luggage, as this may also assist your guide in identifying you. If at any stage you are unable to locate your representative, please contact our Japan ground operator on the number included in your final documents.

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 usually well-maintained and are comparatively smooth compared with the rest of Asia. Coaches and minibuses do not have onboard toilet facilities; however frequent bathroom stops are made for passengers' comfort.

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.

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 18 travellers in each 'Northern Japan: Secrets of Hokkaido', 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). A national escort will accompany each group of 10 or more. 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.

TIPPING POLICY:

Although tipping in Japan is not customary, if you feel you have received an excellent service, please feel free to tip your guide at your discretion.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES:

Japanese society and culture are 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 spare socks, 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.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

If you are travelling within the below Japan public holidays, please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed. Coach, air and train travel may also be affected. Tourist attractions will be open; but may be crowded. Showa Day is on 29th April every year, which will start Golden Week which then runs from 29th April – 5th May, Constitution Memorial Day is on 3rd May, and Emperor's Birthday is on 23rd February every year.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrate 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.

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 five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURING:

Personal Expense - 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 AU\$250 per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that cannot resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

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.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing in Hokkaido occasionally requires climbing quite a number of steps. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails.

Those 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.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

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