



Sapporo & Snow Monkeys

Go Beyond Tour | 13 Days | Physical Level 2

Tokyo – Sapporo – Nagano – Kyoto

Experience the world's largest Snow and Ice festival in Sapporo before coming face to face with the mischievous Japanese Snow Monkeys in the beautiful Alps. There is also time to discover Japan's many treasures – old and new – in Tokyo and Kyoto.

- Spend a day at the Sapporo Snow & Ice Festival
- Get up close to the Snow Monkeys
- Feast on a Genghis Khan dinner
- Explore the ancient capital of Kyoto
- Visit the Sapporo Beer Museum



Sapporo & Snow Monkeys tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on your itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, meals not included, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Go Beyond Tour:

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:

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

Physical Level 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

'Sapporo & Snow Monkeys' is rated as a **physical level 2** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You will be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- 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.

Of course, our National Escorts will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of the tour, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

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.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 13 days in duration including international flights. Please note that due to airline schedules passengers may arrive/depart on Day 2.

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.

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.

- The domestic airlines in this region have frequent schedule changes. For this reason, we have indicated morning, afternoon or evening flights only in the following section. Your National Escort or Local Guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them

Itinerary – Sapporo & Snow Monkeys

Days 1-2: Tokyo

Meals included: Dinner

Fly overnight to Tokyo, the capital of Japan, and transfer approximately 1.5 hours to your hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure.

Please note: Early check in is not included. If your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this, please speak to your Reservations consultant. Transfers will differ depending on group size, but you may share a coach with other passengers who are not part of a Wendy Wu Tour. If you are on a shared bus transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to your hotel.



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 in 1867.

Day 3: Tokyo

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Today, explore the exciting city of Tokyo. Start the day with a visit to Edo Tokyo Museum before heading to Asakusa, one of Tokyo's oldest districts, where you will visit Sensoji Temple and wander down Nakamise shopping street. After lunch, take a boat cruise on the Sumida River passing under 12 bridges. Disembark in Hamarikyu Gardens, an Edo Period Japanese garden surrounded by the Shiodome district's futuristic skyscrapers - a great example of how Japan is the land of contrasts.



Destination Information

Edo Tokyo Museum – The Edo Tokyo Museum illustrates the past of Tokyo, known as Edo until 1869, to relatively recent decades.

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

Sensoji Temple – Sensoji Temple is 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 – Hamarikyu Gardens are a beautiful example of Japanese garden style and sits at the mouth of the Sumida River.

Day 4: Tokyo – Sapporo

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Transfer to the airport and board a 90-minute flight to Sapporo. On arrival, transfer one hour to your hotel, driving by the Tower Clock, an exquisite example of Meiji architecture. This evening, visit the Sapporo Beer Museum followed by a 'Genghis Khan' dinner – a Sapporo speciality of BBQ lamb (other meats and vegetables can be made available for those who don't eat lamb if advised in advance).

**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.

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.

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.

Day 5: Sapporo

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

February Departure: Today you will be escorted on a tour of Sapporo, taking in the highlights of the city and the Snow Festival. Sightseeing will be both on foot and by public transport, as private coaches are not able to travel through the city whilst the festival is in progress. Head to Odori Avenue which features spectacular snow and ice sculptures before wandering to the nearby district of Susukino, where hundreds more ice sculptures are displayed. There will be free time included for shopping.



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

April/November Departures: Today you will be escorted on a tour of Sapporo, taking in the highlights of the city. Head to the Sairo observatory to enjoy the breathtaking views of Lake Toya. After lunch, explore Norboribetsu Jigokundani (Hell Valley), renowned for its volcanic activity, hot steam vents and sulphurous streams. Also visit Upopoy National Museum and Park before returning to Sapporo.

Destination Information

Odori Avenue – At 1.5km long, Odori Avenue 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 – The Susukino district is Japan's largest entertainment district north of Tokyo. During the festival, you will find hundreds of ice sculptures on display here.

Norboribetsu Jigokudani - Jigokudani or 'Hell Valley' is a spectacular, appropriately named valley which displays hot steam vents, sulphurous streams and other volcanic activity. The 24-acre geothermal crater formed from the eruption of Mt Kuttara around 20,000 years ago.

Upopoy National Museum - The Upopoy Museum is focus on the history and culture of Japan's indigenous people, the Ainu. The name Upopoy comes from the Ainu word for "singing together" and the museum aims to preserve and promote awareness of the indigenous culture.

Day 6: Sapporo & Otaru

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

In the morning, ascend to the Okurayama Viewing Point, soaring up to the summit Sapporo Winter Olympics Ski Jump by chair lift – the views of the surrounding mountains are breath-taking. Later, visit the pretty port town of Otaru and take some time to walk along the streets of the village. Also visit the Nikka whisky factory in Yoichi, before returning to Sapporo.



Destination Information

Okurayama Viewing Point – The Okurayama viewing point 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 stunning panoramic views of Sapporo and Ishikari Bay.

Otaru – Otaru is a small harbour city northwest of Sapporo. Its beautifully preserved canal area, interesting herring mansions and old warehouses give Otaru's city centre a distinctive character reminiscent of past decades.

Day 7: Sapporo – Tokyo

Meals included: Breakfast

Transfer around one hour to the pretty port town of Otaru, where you can enjoy strolling along the canal and enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.



This morning, transfer to Shin Chitose Airport and hop on a flight back to Tokyo. On arrival, head to the famous Shibuya Crossing and enjoy free time for lunch. Visit the Tokyo Government Office Building observatory deck for panoramic views of Tokyo and beyond before transferring to your hotel.

Destination Information

Tokyo Metropolitan Building - The 243-metre-tall Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building has two towers, each housing an observatory at a height of 202 metres.

Day 8: Tokyo - Nagano

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Start the morning with a visit to the Meiji Jingu Shrine, set amongst a stretch of Woodland, before transferring to Matsumoto to visit the magnificent Matsumoto Castle, also known as 'Crow Castle' due to its black exterior. Continue to Nagano where you will stay for the next two nights.



Destination Information

Meiji Jingu Shrine – The Meiji shrine is dedicated to the spirits of Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken. It is a popular place for traditional Japanese weddings.

Matsumoto Castle – Known as the 'crow castle due to its dark black exterior, the Matsumoto Castle dates back to the 16th century and is the oldest wooden castle in Japan.

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 destination.

Day 9: Nagano

Meals included: Breakfast

Travel around one hour to Jigokudani Yaen Koen (Monkey Park), to meet the famous Japanese Macaques, or Snow Monkeys. From the bus park, you will walk around 35 minutes along snowy paths at an incline to the main pool where the monkeys bathe. Warm and sturdy footwear is essential. Accustomed to humans, the monkeys almost completely ignore their human guests and can therefore be observed from very close. On the way back to Nagano, make a short stop in the small town of Obuse and stroll down the cosy streets. In the afternoon, visit the historic Zenkoji Temple in Nagano, where you will spend around one hour exploring on foot.



Please note: You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for tonight as your main luggage will be transferred separately this morning to your Kyoto hotel and arrive the next day.

Destination Information

Jigokudani Yaen Koen – Home to Japanese Macaques, also known as Snow Monkeys, Jigokudani literally means 'hell 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.

Obuse – Obuse is a small town in Nagano Prefecture, about 20km north-east of Nagano City. As well as its many art galleries, this town of around 12,000 people also has several sake breweries and craft shops.

Zenkoji Temple – Founded 1400 years ago, Zenkoji stores what many believe to be the first Buddhist statue ever brought to Japan. Zenkoji'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.

Day 10: Nagano - Kyoto

Meals included: Breakfast

Transfer to the train station and take a Limited Express train to Nagoya, where you will change onto one of Japan's super-fast bullet trains to Kyoto. On arrival, head straight to a quintessential Japanese experience – a tea ceremony. This private tea ceremony will be led by a Tea Master in a Kyoto tearoom, will demonstrate the traditional rituals of tea preparation and service.



Destination Information

Kyoto – Kyoto 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 11: Kyoto

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today will be spent exploring Kyoto, experiencing the beauty of this Ancient Capital. A private coach will transport you around the city, and you will explore each site on foot. Walking today will be approximately 4-5 hours. Start the day visiting Sanjusangendo Temple, followed by Kinkakuji Temple, known as the Golden Pavillion, one of Kyoto's most famous temples. Continue to Nijo Castle, an ornamental castle, before taking a walk around Nishiki Market, known as 'Kyoto's Kitchen'. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner.



Destination Information

Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavillion) – Kinkakuji Temple, known as the Golden Pavilion, is a Zen Buddhist temple set in a magnificent Japanese strolling garden. The structure is a brilliant golden hue colour and is very minimalistic. The temple was once the retirement villa of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. This is Kyoto's most popular tourist attraction so there are often a lot of other 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 'nightingale floors'.

Nishiki Market – A narrow, five block long shopping street lined by more than 100 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 – Measuring 120 metres, Sanjusangendo's temple hall is Japan's longest wooden structure. Sanjusangendo is famous for its 1001 statues of Kannon, the goddess of mercy.

Day 12-13: Depart Osaka

Meals included: Breakfast

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight. The transfer to Kansai International Airport will take approximately 2 hours.

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Sapporo & Snow Monkeys tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Osaka, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

Transfers: In the event that your flight departs outside of the majority group departure time, you will be transferred to the airport by a shared coach (not with other Wendy Wu Tours passengers). If you are on a shared coach transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to the coach.

Please inform our reservations team of any allergies and/or special dietary requirements at time of booking.

Sapporo & Snow Monkeys 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

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. 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 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 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. 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. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in the UK.

On some days where lots of 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.

To give you more flexibility and choice when travelling, we have carefully balanced special highlight meals with evenings at leisure so that you can explore the many culinary delights that Japan has to offer. Alternatively, you can

Evenings at leisure

use this time to enjoy the facilities of your hotel. Your National Escort will be happy to provide you with advice about good places to eat and assist in the booking of transportation to get you there (at your own expense).

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 that 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 do exist between Australia and Japan.

Please note that in Japan, hotel rooms and bathrooms are renowned for being small. 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 a 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. 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 porterage 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.

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 compared the rest of Asia.

Bullet trains: Second class reserved seats are booked for our groups on bullet trains; there will be toilet facilities on board. Due to the limited space on bullet trains, a separate luggage transfer service will be arranged for all suitcases (one case per person). You will need to pack a separate overnight bag to carry on the train as your suitcase will not arrive until the following day after a bullet train journey. Your guide will indicate when you will need to prepare for this throughout your tour

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.

Cultural Difference

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 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 in Japan

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 and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Showa Day is on 29th April every year, Golden Week is 29th April – 5th May 2021, Constitution Memorial Day is on 3rd May 2021 and Emperor's Birthday is on 23rd December 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 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

The group size on our Go Beyond Tours is on average 10 passengers, with a maximum of 18. You may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling. On our group tour we operate a seat-and-a-half policy, allowing you to travel in greater comfort.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of eight 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.

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 travelers 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.

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

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 \$250AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. In your Final Documentation an Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities.

Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense 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. 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.

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 followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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