



NORTHERN JAPAN: WINTER IN HOKKAIDO

Dine on the freshest seafood, sip the warmest whiskeys, and explore 2000 years of Northern Japanese history before taking to the snow-covered mountains of Niseko.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



Asia, Japan



10 days Call for a quote pp



Private

Journey Overview

Winter in Japan is a rare treat. Discover the far North, where cold fronts from Siberia shift blankets of light, powdery snow to the peaks and coasts of Hokkaido. Here, quaint canals and coast towns vie with Narnia-esque forests and some of the best ski fields on earth. Dine on the freshest seafood, sip the warmest whiskeys, and explore 2000 years of Northern Japanese history before taking to the snow-covered mountains of Niseko. Spend your days gliding down the slopes and hiking through crisp woods for a winter that's truly exhilarating.

Journey Highlights

- Enjoy an exclusive sushi-making class with your own master sushi chef; learn the subtle art of slicing raw seafood using the freshest ingredients, before feasting on your fare
- Discover the Hokkaido Museum, which showcases 1.2 million years of history; a vital glimpse into the culture and wisdom of the Ainu people
- Create your own Christmas gifts and souvenirs in a private glass-bead making workshop
- Sampling some of Japan's finest malt whiskies during a tour and tasting at the Nikka Whisky's Yoichi Distillery
- Travel back in time along the Otaru Canal, once a major trading post and warehouses district, seeing the grand architecture and mansions of Otaru's wealthy past
- Spend three days exploring the powdery-white snow and forests of Niseko while staying in the luxurious Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Hakodate, Japan

Welcome to Hakodate. Arrive to a warm A&K welcome and private transfer to Wakamatsu Hot Spring Resort — set right on the ocean. On arrival, you'll be greeted with a matcha and Wakamatsu cake before settling into your sea facing room. This evening, indulge in a multi-course kaiseki dinner.

Wakamatsu Hot Spring Resort / Meals: D

Day 2: Hakodate

Embark on full day exploring Hakodate with your private A&K guide. Catch fisherman haggling with friendly merchants at the Hakodate Morning Market and smell the toasty aroma of freshly caught crabs grilling over hot coals. See sweeping views of the port from the slopes of the Motomachi district and descend the cobblestones of Daisan-zaka to iconic Hakodate Street. Listen in as your guide unravels tales of days past, while sampling one of the area's famous Hokkaido milk ice-creams — flavours abound from melon to squid ink.

Enjoy an exclusive sushi-making class with your own master sushi chef. Learn the subtle art of slicing raw fish using the freshest ingredients, then sample your creations in front of breathtaking views of the old port. This afternoon, wander through the vast colonial rooms of the Old Public Hall of Hakodate with its spell-binding vistas over Hakodate Bay. You'll have the chance to dress-up in period outfits for vivid photography (additional cost).

Your guide will regale you with stories of the 19th century civil war between the Samurai and the emperor at impressive Fort Goryokaku, before you ascend the 334 metres to the summit of Mount Hakodate on board the Hakodate Ropeway. Watch as this vast panorama comes to life with thousands of glittering lights.

Wakamatsu Hot Spring Resort / Meals: BLD

Day 3: Sapporo

Welcome to Sapporo, the gateway to Asia's finest skiing and some of the snowiest regions in the world. Sapporo is also a thriving, stylish city in its own right. See British and Hokkaido cultures fuse at the delicious chocolate mecca of Shiroi Koibito Park, a winter paradise and perfect for pre-Christmas treats. Follow your guide to the 19th century Hokkaido Shrine where you'll learn of traditional deities and how they play such an important role in Hokkaido citizens' lives. End your day on a high at the Okurayama Observatory for spectacular views over the city. This evening is yours to enjoy at leisure.

JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo / Meals: B

Day 4: Sapporo

Discover the history of Sapporo with your A&K guide. From crabs to the freshest sashimi plates, Sapporo is Japan's seafood capital. Marvel at the size of the hairy crab, king crab and star anise at the Sapporo Central Wholesale Market, and don't forget to try one of their famous cream puffs. Stroll the long strip of wet and dry stores and discover myriad quaint restaurants for lunch.

This afternoon, you'll travel further back in time at the Hokkaido Museum (Mori no Charenga), which showcases 1.2 million years of history; a vital glimpse into the culture and wisdom of the Ainu people. Finish your afternoon at the Sapporo Beer Museum, learning all about the beer-brewing process. Smell the hearty aromas of hops and barley, and sample different brews to show off your knowledge (additional cost). This evening is yours to explore at leisure. Perhaps wander over to one of the beer halls for all-you-can-eat BBQ mutton, a popular dish with locals.

JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo / Meals: B

Day 5: Otaru

Head northeast of Sapporo to the charming port-city of Otaru, known for its beautifully preserved canal area and interesting herring mansions. The best way to take in this small harbour district is on foot. Follow your guide through the scenic streets of Sakaimachi, taking in the mouth blown glass shops, musical boxes, matcha shops, quaint eateries, and arts and crafts boutiques — you won't leave empty handed. Be sure to taste the fresh-from-the-ocean sushi, before continuing on to the Music Box Museum. End your morning on board an Otaru Canal Cruise for an altogether different perspective, as you float by the grand architecture of Otaru's wealthy past.

Tuck into a local lunch (payable locally) and prepare your palette for an afternoon sampling Japan's finest malt whiskies at the Nikka Whisky's Yoichi Distillery. Enjoy a walking tour and finish in the tasting room. End the day with a private glass bead-making lesson where you'll learn about the history of Otaru glass and make your own unique souvenirs. This evening is yours to enjoy at leisure.

JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo / Meals: B

Day 6: Niseko

Discover the powdery-white slopes of Niseko, Japan's renowned ski town. Check in to the Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono, your luxury resort for the next four nights, with stunning views across the Annupuri ranges. There are many choices for lunch; perhaps take to The Lounge for Hokkaido cuisine in a casual setting. For world-class sushi and sashimi, you cannot beat Sushi Mitsukawa, owned by Michelin-starred Chef, Mitsukawa — these two options are just the beginning (lunch payable locally).

This afternoon, discover your resort at leisure. Challenge yourself to a round at the beautiful Hanazono Golf course, stunningly set within a white birch forest. For wellness, take to the pool, soak in the Onsen baths or head to the Spa for complete rejuvenation (additional cost). For a special dinner, we recommend French-inspired Moliere Montagne, run by three-starred Michelin Chef Hiroshi Nakamichi (payable locally).

Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono / Meals: B

Day 7-9: Niseko

Spend three days exploring the snow at your doorstep. Niseko enjoys an average of 14 metres of annual snowfall, and with fresh powder most days, this is the perfect place for beginners.

Skiers and snowboarders can zig-zag to their hearts content with ski-in and ski-out facilities straight from the resort, a fantastic lift system, excellent learning facilities and lessons in English. There is a diverse range of off-piste and groomed steeps for every level. Fly through the forests, hit the parks, ski the back country, or take a lesson to improve your technique.

For those who want something a little more relaxed, snowshoeing is an excellent option. Discover the beauty of the Hanazono forest, with its majestic Narnia-esque terrain and its elusive wildlife. This is a group tour the whole family can enjoy (additional cost).

Jump onboard a high-performance snowmobile. Experienced guides will take you romping through lush forest and snow-covered pastures to see breathtaking views of the Niseko range. This is a safe activity for beginners, with plenty of time to practise first and lots of stops to catch your breath (additional cost).

At the end of each incredible day, you have a world of activities to enjoy at your resort. Perhaps take to the cosy Bar and Cigar Lounge for Gin-O-Clock, dine at one of the many world-class restaurants, or rent a karaoke room for something light and fun (bookings essential).

Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono / Meals: B**Day 10: Depart Sapporo**

Today your winter snow adventure has come to an end. Enjoy private transfer to New Chitose Airport for your onward flight.

Meals: B

Map



Accommodation

Wakamatsu Hot Spring Resort



Offering almost a century of Japanese tradition, Wakamatsu Hot Spring Ryokan was founded in 1922 in Yunokawa, Hakodate. Wakamatsu has been the Showa Emperor's designated Ryokan in Hakodate. More recently, it has also been recognized with honor in the Michelin Guide to Hokkaido. Even with such tremendous history, we have never stopped innovating new experiences to offer our beloved guests better service, facility and the ultimate Onsen Ryokan experience.

Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono



Set in a spectacular natural landscape with stunning views across the Annupuri ranges and Mount Yotei, Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono embodies personal luxury for global connoisseurs. A true year-round mountain resort with spaces and guestrooms designed for enriching experiences in an environment of carefully curated art, cuisine and contemporary design.

Abercrombie & Kent

**Call Us Now on
1300 851 924
within Australia**

Melbourne Office:

T: +61 (0)3 9536 1800

F: +61 (0) 3 9536 1805

E: contact@abercrombiekent.com.au

Address

Level 26 (North Tower)

80 Collins St

Melbourne, VIC, 3000

International:

New Zealand Call: 0800 441 638

Asia Call: 800 4747 7700