

Sapporo, Otaru, Asahikawa, and Furano

4th of July Omiyage Weekender 2022

June 30th – July 6th, 2022,



5nts/7days from: \$2995 triple \$3095 double \$3650 single

Cancel for any reason up to 60 days prior-FULL REFUND!

Maximum Tour size is 24 tour members!



Omiyage is a gift or souvenir you give to friends, coworkers, and family after returning home from a trip. Omiyage is so much more than just an edible souvenir. Here in Hawaii, bringing back omiyage from Japan is almost a tradition.

Sapporo is one of Japan's most cosmopolitan cities. Its wide streets and tree lined boulevards give the city an almost European feel. Coffee shops and cafes proliferate throughout the city and the center is packed with a fantastic range of shops, restaurants, and bars. After a day of exploring the city, you can get your energy back over a hot meal and the delicious liquid gold, Sapporo beer.

No Hokkaido tour is ever complete without a visit to Otaru, a romantic port town steeped in a rich history that dates to its glory days as a major herring center.

There is more yet, as we venture to Asahikawa, Hokkaido 2nd largest city. On the way, an all-important stop at Sunagawa Highway Oasis. It is truly a shopping oasis, everything Hokkaido is here under one roof and duty free!

Lastly, to enjoy the best of a Hokkaido's summer, visits to Furano and Biei, best known for their picturesque rural landscapes. July is one of the best times, when the lavender fields are in bloom.

So much to see and do on our 5-night tour. There is a free day in Sapporo, Nijo Fish Market, Shiroyo Koibito Park, 2-hand on experiences, ice cream making and fruit picking, and 2 flower viewing spots. There is even a drive along Sunagawa Sweet Road, historically known as Highway 12, the main route between Sapporo and Asahikawa. Today, it's heaven if you want to get your sugar fix, offering a variety of cake and pastry shops.

Itinerary/Details

Day 1 – June 30th, 2022, Thursday – Depart from Honolulu

Hawaiian Airlines #441 Departs Honolulu 2:10 pm – Arrive Chitose 5:50 pm + 1

Please meet your Panda Travel representative at the Hawaiian Airlines International check-in counters located Terminal 2, Lobby 4 a minimum of 3 hours prior to the departure time.

Day 2 – July 1st, 2022, Friday– Chitose-Sapporo

On arrival in Chitose, please make your way to the baggage claim area as we need to clear immigration and customs. Free luggage carts are available. We suggest that you use one as there is a short walk to our chartered bus. Our local English-speaking Japanese guide will be there to meet us.

Accommodations for our stay in Sapporo are at the Century Royal Hotel Sapporo, ideally situated, adjacent to the shopping zone in front of JR Sapporo Station, and directly connected via an underground passage.

The drive time from Chitose is under one hour. Our arrival at the hotel will be approximately 7:00pm allowing you time to go out for a night stroll or bite to eat.

There is a 24-hour convenience store just off the ground floor of our hotel.



Accommodations: Century Royal Hotel Sapporo  **Free**

Day 3 – July 2nd, 2022, Saturday– Sapporo (B)



After breakfast, please meet your guide by 8:30am as our day begins with a short drive to visit Hokkaido Shrine, a deeply spiritual place, and the resting place of four deities. With origins that date to 1869, the grounds, lush in nature, are filled with history as well, a variety of wild animals such as the Hokkaido squirrel. Enjoy free time to explore.

From here, off to Okurayama Ski Jump for a ride on the lift to its peak. This ski jump stadium was used at the Winter Olympics held in Sapporo in 1972.

Once at the top enjoy time at the viewing lounge and the panoramic views of the city of Sapporo, the Ishikari Plain, and Ishikari Bay. It is also an ideal location to view the start line of the ski jump right before your eyes - looking directly down at the steep slope of the approach will certainly give you an idea of how the skiers are feeling when they begin their jumps!



Next, a visit to Nijo Fish Market, over 100-years old and said to have developed in the early Meiji Period when fishermen from Ishikari Bay began selling fish here. Over time, the number of bars and greengrocers in the area began to increase, laying the foundations for today's Nijo Fish Market. The market continues to serve residents' culinary needs and is also popular with visitors.

As Hokkaido is surrounded by the sea, the market offers up a treasure trove of seafood. With Sapporo as its main city, the freshest catches from all over the island are sold here. Each store has its own unique selection, and it is interesting to see the differences between them. Besides an array of seafood, they offer dried fish and other processed seafood products.

You can find a variety of sit-down restaurants to enjoy lunch or wait a bit until we cross over to Tanukikoji Shopping Street, Sapporo's oldest covered shopping arcade. This covered arcade stretches for 10-blocks with over 200 stores.

Here you will find old and traditional merchants selling kimonos, tea, or incense side by side with modern stores specializing in computers and software or state-of-the-art electronics and digital cameras – all of which lends it a bazaar-like quality. Some of the popular shops that Hawaii folks enjoy are here, a multi-story 108-yen Daiso, as well 24-hour Mega Don Quijote. A variety of additional dining options are available along the street.

We are allowing for plenty of free time to browse and shop at your leisure; however, if you prefer to remain longer and return to the hotel on your own, choose between the easy unground path or taxi, less than \$10.



Accommodations: Century Royal Hotel Sapporo **free**

Day 4 – July 3rd, 2022, Sunday– Sapporo-Otaru-Sapporo (B)

After breakfast, please meet your guide by 9:00am as we are off to Otaru and a full day of touring.

From old days, when they sailed trading boats from Honshu-mainland to Hokkaido, Otaru played important roles as the center of trade or commerce, not to mention fishery in Hokkaido. Walking along the main streets, you find a charming and nostalgic city filled with historic architecture.

Here you will find the old remnant of Otaru’s major industry, glassware shops. Glass buoys were used to light up fishing boats at night to attract herrings. As your stroll along Sakaimachi Street, enjoy the variety of shops offering glassworks, music boxes, and sweet shops. A must stop is at the Music Box Museum where you will find over 15,000 music boxes, many for sale.

Enjoy free time along Sakaimachi Street. Shop, browse and have lunch on your own at one of many restaurants. Otaru is well known for its beer, and Otaru Beer, next to the canal, is a popular restaurant with a medieval Germanic theme. If sushi is more to your liking, a stroll down to Sushi-dori Street is well worth your time. You will find a collection of some 20 sushi restaurants.

A couple of recommended must stops, the Kitaichi Glass Shop where you can enjoy looking and shopping for beautiful glassware. Another famous landmark in Otaru is the Kitakaro confectionary shop. There is a cult like following of its famous honeyed wheeled layered cakes and there are good reasons why. The layered cakes are delicate and the honey flavored intense, but not too sweet.



This afternoon a visit at Shiroi Koibito Park, a theme park by Ishiya, a local chocolate company. The company’s flagship product is the Shiroi Koibito cookie, which consists of two thin butter cookies and a layer of white chocolate in between. It is one of the most famous souvenirs from Hokkaido.

The park consists of a free area with a shop, cafe and restaurant and a paid area with various chocolate related exhibits and, most interestingly, a few large windows through which you can observe candy production process in the factory.



Shiroi Koibito Park

Now, off to Sapporo's Yurigahara Park, loved for its wide variety of flowers as well as the greatest rock garden in all of Japan. If you enjoy flower viewing, this is one absolute must when visiting Sapporo.

Yurigahara Park has approximately 6,400 types of flowers and plants and features unique flowerbeds and gardens including the "World Lily Gardens," where approximately 100 types of lilies collected from around the world can be seen. There is also, the "World Gardens," which comprise four different types of gardens built in collaboration with Sapporo's sister cities Portland, Munich, and Shen Yang. Enjoy free time to explore on your own or ride the "Lily Train," which circles the park to view flowers from inside a comfortable train.

Now, off back to our hotel, arrival by 4:30pm. The remainder of the afternoon and evening is free.



Accommodations: Century Royal Hotel Sapporo **Wi-Fi free**

Day 5 – July 4th, 2022, Monday– Sapporo-Otaru-Sapporo (B)

After breakfast, enjoy a complete free day here in Sapporo for shopping and or sightseeing. For those who would like to go back to Tanukikoji Shopping Street, the Panda Travel escort will set a time and walk over.



Accommodations: Century Royal Hotel Sapporo **Wi-Fi free**

Day 6 – July 5th, 2022, Tuesday– Sapporo-Asahikawa-Furano (B/D)

After breakfast, please meet our guide in the lobby by 8:30am. We are off to Asahikawa, Hokkaido's second largest city. A city of water, Asahikawa sits on the confluences of the Ishikari, Biei, Chubetsu and Ushibetsu rivers. There are over 700 bridges in the city, the most famous of which has become an attraction, the Asahibashi over the Ishikari River, completed in 1932.

The drive time is just under two hours. Along the way we will be stopping at the Sunagawa Highway Oasis, where you can enjoy shopping and tasting local specialties. This is a good spot for omiyage shopping.

The shops and the cafeteria are run by the major manufacturers of Hokkaido, and it's possible to find many of Hokkaido's specialties here including melons, boxes of potatoes, whole crabs, famous stuffed squid from Hakodate, Royce chocolates and other Hokkaido chocolate confections.

You will also find a wide variety of Japanese sweets and a vast assortment of packaged food items. As well other souvenirs items, such as T-shirts and wooden animals, notably owls and bears: Owls and bears were and remain very special animals for the local Ainu people.

A fun stop, bustling and full of energy!



Sunagawa Highway Oasis

From here, a stop at the Asahikawa Ramen Village for lunch on your own. Like several other places in Hokkaido, Asahikawa is famous for its ramen. Whereas Sapporo is known for its miso-based broth and Hakodate for its salt-based broth, Asahikawa is known for its shoyu based broths.

The broth of Asahikawa Ramen is known for being quite oily, and there is often a thin layer of oil on top of the soup. Another characteristic of the local ramen is the generally thin, hard, and wavy noodles. The range of toppings is quite typical and includes green onions, pork, bamboo shoots and eggs. Enjoy time here for lunch on your own.



Asahikawa Ramen Village

This afternoon we make our way to Biei and Furano, towns in the center of Hokkaido, best known for their picturesque rural landscapes. Needless to say, July is the best time to visit, the lavender fields are in bloom!

Our first stop is at Biei Blue Pond, just outside the hot spring town of Shirogane Onsen. This artificially created pond, one of several was a result of the dam that that was built to stop the volcanic mud of erupting Mt. Tokachi from reaching Biei town.

The scenery is truly stunning with its unreal blue color, owed to natural minerals dissolved in the water. Depending on the weather and the season it can change from a milky light blue to a deep green turquoise. With tree stumps protruding from the surface of the water, the Blue Pond has an ethereal and enchanting appearance.

Now, off to Flower Land Kamifurano, a popular flower farm that really comes alive during the summer. Located in the middle of Hokkaido's flower fields, July brings beautiful lavender, salvia, and lilies. Come, let enjoy the fantastic views and get in some great photos. There are several paths to walk around and take in the colors as well as the Kamifurano valley. We have included a tractor bus ride for a more leisurely way to enjoy views.

On the otherside, inside the large barn you will find a small eatery and souvenirs, locally produced goods and produce. The highlight, Furano melon which is a must try and we have included.

From here, off to our onsen resort hotel, New Furano Prince Hotel, arrival by 5:00pM, followed by dinner at 6pm. Before and after dinner, enjoy the hot springs here as well as several other activities in the neighborhood. Just a 2-

minute walk from the hotel is Kaze no Garden, and English garden complete with an authentic cottage. There are 365 varieties of flowers and a total of 20,000 plants in the garden.

Two other areas to consider visiting include the Furano Dorama Kan, a shop with a selection of paper works and goods related to 3 dramas that were filmed in the area. The shop is a replica of the Furano Station built in 1942.

The other spot is the Ningle Terrace, a shopping area located in the green forest. The shops are in the form of wood cabins. Enjoy the cool breeze as you walk through the area.



Accommodations: New Furano Prince Hotel **free**

Day 7 – July 6th, 2022, Wednesday– Furano-Chitose (B)

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 8:45am. It's our last day on tour, but you would never know it by all we have planned to see and do before our flight home later this evening.

The morning begins with a short drive to the Furano Cheese Factory where you can observe the production process of the local camembert type cheese. Cheese samples, including those of a black cheese colored by squid ink, can be tasted in the factory shop.

Besides the cheese factory, there is also an ice cream parlor and a pizzeria. While here, enjoy a hands-on ice cream making experience. Best yet, is that you get to eat the fruits of your labor.

From here, a visit to the Ohashi Cherry Farm for a fun fruit picking experience and then you get to enjoy the fruits of your labor.

Now, off for a drive along Sunagawa Sweet Road, historically, Highway 12. While most take the faster route along the expressway, they miss out on the history and charm of villages on route. Sunagawa has designated a section of their Highway 12 as Sunagawa Sweet Road. Along this stretch of road are at least ten sweet shops. While we won't have time to visit them all, we'll do our best to include as many as possible. For sure, today you will get your sugar fix and maybe take a nap for the drive out to the Chitose Airport.

Now off to the Chitose Airport to begin the check-in process. Arrival will be at approximately 4:00pm.

Hawaiian Airlines #442 Departs Chitose 7:50 pm – Arrive Honolulu 8:30 am

