

*HOKKAIDO's Lavender Tour*  
*"An explosion of color"*

*July 6<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023*



**The Hokkaido summer stage is alive with color**

**7 nights/9 days from: \$4689 triple; \$4789 double; \$5339 single**

**\$100 off per person when you pay with a personal check/ cash**

*Cancel for any reason up to 60 days prior to departure date for a -FULL REFUND!*

**Itinerary/Details**

**Day 1 – July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Thursday – Depart from Honolulu**

**Hawaiian Airlines #441 Departs Honolulu 2:20 pm – Arrive Chitose 5:50 pm**

Meet the Panda Travel representative at Hawaiian Airlines international check-in counters 3 hours prior to the departure flight time.

**Day 2 – July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 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 8:00pm allowing you time to go out for a night stroll or bite to eat. You can choose from a simple bento from Daimau to a variety of ramen shops or even sit down for a seafood or beef dinner. There is a 24-hour convenience store just off the ground floor of our hotel.

In July, the days are long, locals are out enjoying the daylight that can go up to 10:00pm and various pop-up beer gardens. Sapporo is the perfect city to spend a summer weekend.



**Century Royal Hotel Sapporo**

**Accommodations: Century Royal Hotel Sapporo**

**Day 3 – July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Saturday – Sapporo (B)**



After breakfast, please meet your guide by 8:30am.

Our morning begins at **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!



From here, we're off to **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.

You will be able to observe the candy production process in the factory as well as purchasing some souvenir treats to bring home.



**Shiroi Koibito Park**

Next, we'll visit **Sapporo Central Wholesale Market** (Jogai). This market offers some of the freshest fish and produce in Japan. At the "Curb Market," you can find approximately 60 stores selling everything from fruits to seasonal goods. Pick up some fresh crab and salmon sushi, a donburi bowl, or other regional delicacies as you enjoy lunch on your own here.

This afternoon, we'll stop at **Chitosetsuru Sake Museum**. Established in 1872, this brewery is not only Sapporo's first brewery, but it is also the only sakagura (sake brewery) in Sapporo. In addition to learning about Chitosetsuru's history, we'll enjoy sampling the famous brews of the ginjo, junmai, and honjozo varieties. Stop by the shop for sake gifts and seasonal products and try some sake ice cream.

We'll then head 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 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 \$15.**

**Accommodations: Century Royal Hotel**



### **Day 4 – July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Sunday – Sapporo-Otaru-Sapporo (B)**

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 8:30am as we are off on another fun filled touring day.

The morning begins with a visit to **Yurigahara Park** with over 6,400 types of flowers and plants, comprising 4 different gardens built in collaboration with Sapporo's sister cities, Portland, Munich, and Shen Yang.

The park features unique flower beds and gardens including the "world of Lily Garden," where approximately 100 types of lilies collected from around the world can be seen. Enjoy free time here to take in the beauty.

Now, we're off to **Royce' Cacao & Chocolate Town**. This brand new facility—launched in November 2022—takes visitors through an immersive factory experience. Here, we'll learn how cocoa beans transform into chocolate bars, browse through Royce's antique collections, and delight in the baked sweets, soft serve ice cream, and 200 types of chocolate available at their on-site shop.

Next on to **Otaru**, a romantic port town steeped in a rich history that dates to its glory days as a major herring center. Otaru was the terminal station for Hokkaidō's first railroad, and today nostalgic warehouses and buildings still line the picturesque canal district.

Over the last 100 years Otaru has developed and prospered as "the sea entrance of Hokkaido" and gained the nickname "Wall Street of the North." The glassworks shops, coffee shops, restaurants and shopping malls along the canal have been converted from stone-built or brick-built warehouses, which were used for storage in the days when commerce flourished, and the canal was crowded with jostling barges. When night falls, oil lamps on the cobbled streets are lit, and the town evokes a gentle, nostalgic mood.

Time now to discover Otaru, renowned for its glassworks, music boxes, and sweet shops that can be found lining **Sakaimachi Street**. As you near the end of Sakaimachi Street, look and listen when you come to the vintage steam clock at the front of the charming Music Box Museum. The nostalgic atmosphere inside the main building of the museum takes you back in time. The museum houses almost 15,000 music boxes, ranging from matchbox sized souvenirs to precisely tuned masterpieces. The **Music Box Museum** has something for everybody, from The Beatles to the latest J-pop hits.

Another must, the **Kitaichi Glass Shop** where you can enjoy looking and shopping for beautiful glassware. Where they once made a lot of glass buoys and lamps for fishery, now the focus is on products to attract visitors.

For some sweet times, visit another famous landmark, the **Kitakaro confectionery shop**. The cake and confectionery store are a popular stop for tourists and locals alike. 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. Sit and enjoy at the small café right in the store. Coffee, tea, and ice cream are also available.

Enjoy lunch on your own at one of many restaurants just steps away. 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.



Otaru

From here, we return to Sapporo and our hotel, arriving by 5:00pm. Once back at our hotel, enjoy the remainder of the afternoon and evening at leisure - shopping, sightseeing or a stroll along beautiful Odori Park.

**Accommodations: Century Royal Hotel**



### Day 5 – July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Monday – Sapporo-Asahikawa (B)

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 9:00am as we journey 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.

Along the drive we will be making a stop at **Sunagawa Highway Oasis**, where you can enjoy shopping and tasting local specialties. While it may be too early for lunch, pick up some snacks for the remainder of the ride.

The major manufacturers of Hokkaido run the shops and the cafeteria, 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. It is a fun stop, bustling and full of energy, enjoy! And, it's duty free!

Once in Asahikawa, we will stop for lunch (on your own) at **Asahikawa Ramen Village**. 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.

From here, a visit to our third sake brewery on this tour, **Otokoyama Sake Brewery**, producing Asahikawa's most famous sake, both within Japan and worldwide.

Beside the museum covering all facets of Otokoyama's rich sake brewing heritage, including ancient sake-related literature and art, you will also have time to enjoy their tasting room and gift shop. Sample some of the most famous sake in the world, as well as the opportunity to purchase magnificent sake sets, and cups.

We are now off to our hotel for the evening, the **JR Inn Asahikawa**, directly connected to the JR Asahikawa Station and **AEON Mall**. Opened in the spring of 2015, this hotel is perfect for our evening in Asahikawa. Arrival will be by 3:15pm.

Besides its location, the hotel offers a public bath for men and women in a semi-outdoor setting, rooms with views of the surrounding countryside, and a direct elevator down to the AEON Mall. There is no need to bundle up as you shop and dine the evening away.



JR Inn Asahikawa- room, public bath, and view from many of the rooms

Accommodations: JR Inn Asahikawa 

Day 6 – July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Tuesday – Asahikawa-Biei-Furano (B/L/D)



**Biei**



**Blue Pond**



**Tomita Farm**

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 8:00am as we are off on a full day of touring. The morning begins with a drive to **Biei**, a small town surrounded by a picturesque landscape of gently rolling hills and vast fields. Sit back and enjoy the scenic northwest area of the Biei, “Patchwork Road,” so named for the appearance of its fields.

Over the years, the area's beauty has attracted the attention of marketing professionals, and some trees were used in commercials or for package label designs. Among these famous trees are a row of larch trees on the Mild Seven Hill (from a cigarette commercial), a poplar named Ken and Mary Tree (from a car commercial) and the Seven Star Tree (which appeared on cigarette packages). A group of oak trees is known as the Parents and Child Tree.

Other sites of interest in the **Patchwork Road** area are the Hokusei Hill Observatory, a pyramid structure that offers nice views over the fields of Biei and the Zerebu Hill, a flower park.

Next, a visit at **Blue Pond**, getting its name from the unnaturally bright blue hue of its water. With tree stumps protruding from the surface of the water, the Blue Pond has an ethereal and enchanting appearance.

The blue color of the pond has not been fully explained but is attributed to the presence of aluminum hydroxide in the water that reflects the shorter wavelength blue light the same way the earth's atmosphere does. The color of the pond also changes depending on what angle you look at it from and even at different times of the day. Although the water appears blue when viewed from the land, the color is not found in the water itself.

Our next visit is at **Takushin kan**, an exhibition hall with beautiful landscape photography by renowned photographer Maeda Shinzo and his eldest son Akira. The exhibition displays landscape photographs from across Japan with an emphasis on photos from the local Biei region.

The photo gallery displays about 80 pieces of artwork and allows you to enjoy viewing the beauty of Biei in all seasons. Unfortunately, you are not allowed to take photographs inside the gallery.

Now, time for a **Japanese style lunch** at a local restaurant.

The afternoon begins with a visit to the panoramic flower gardens of **Shikisai-no-oka**. Enjoy the spectacular views across fifteen hectares of land on Oka-no-machi Biei. It is a paradise of seasonal blossoms from spring through to fall, in which several dozen different species of flowers and grasses flourish. Why not come and enjoy the beautiful fragrance of the blossoms amid spectacular panoramic scenery?

The name Shikisai-no-Oka is a combination of two words, “Shikisai (color)” and “Shiki (four seasons)” Carpeted with flowers from April to October, enjoy the colors and fragrance of several dozen different

flowers such as tulip, lupine, lavender, salvia, sunflower, dahlia, and Japanese anemone according to the season.

Our last stop on this touring day is at **Tomita Farm**. Until the snow falls in October, Tomita's fields are covered in a rainbow array of flowers. With the Daisetsuzan National Park as a backdrop, this is one of the most photographed spots in Hokkaido.


Open to the public from sunrise to sunset, enjoy viewing lavender and various colorful flowers planted on this farm. Enjoy free time here so that you can walk around and take in the beauty. Among the facilities here include a display area for flower arrangements, a photo gallery exhibiting the four seasons of flowers displayed on the farm, a distillery house where lavender essential oil is extracted, gift shops and cafes.

Now, we make our way to our hotel for the evening, **New Furano Prince Hotel**. Our arrival will be by 5:30pm followed by a **Japanese style dinner** at 6:30pm.

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**, an 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** 

### Day 7 – July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Wednesday – Furano-Lake Akan (B/D)

After breakfast, please meet your guide by 9:00am as we are off on a full day of touring as we make our way to Lake Akan.

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.

Now, a stop at **Michi no Eki Pier 21 Shihoro**. Michi no Eki are government designated rest areas with food outlets, shops, and restrooms. Enjoy free time to shop and have lunch on your own.

From here, a visit to **Onneto Lake**, a part of Akan National Park in Ashoro. "Onneto" means old pond or big pond in the aboriginal Ainu language. The lake with a circumference of 2.5 km was created when the river was dammed up due to the volcanic eruption of Mt. Meakan-dake. Due to high acidity levels, fish cannot live in the lake but ezo salamanders and crawfish are able to.

The surface of the lake beautifully changes color from light blue to green and dark blue, depending on the time of day or the season. Along with Okotanpe Lake and Shinonome Lake, the lake is considered one of the three major mystery lakes in Hokkaido.

Under the shadow of Mt. Meakandake, this famous lake with the nickname, “Lake of Five Colors” fascinates all that come to visit. From the wooden viewing platform jutting from the water's surface, you will be able to see Meakandake to the left and Akanfuji to the right. On windless days, these mountains are reflected in the water like a mirror.

From here we make our way to our hotel for the evening, **Akanko Tsuruga Wings**, a “New Style” – stylish and contemporary - hot spring Ryokan. Many indigenous or local artworks are on display at the gallery on the lobby floor. This onsen hotel is ideally situated along the town’s main street so that after dinner if you choose to take a stroll, many of the shops are open late into the evening. With an arrival of 4:30pm, enjoy free time to try the onsen or just relax.

Tonight, enjoy a **buffet dinner** at the hotel beginning at 6:00pm. After dinner, a short walk over to **Akan Ainukotan Village** and the theater for a **fire dance show**. Enjoy this traditional Ainu show which expresses their lifestyle with wildlife, nature, hunting played out through song and dance. After the show, a short walk back to our hotel and the remainder of the evening is free.

**Accommodations: Hotel Lake Akan Tsuruga Wings** 

### Day 8 – July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Thursday – Lake Akan-Obihiro (B/L/D)

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 8:45am for a full touring day.

The morning begins with a sightseeing **boat cruise on Lake Akan**. Enjoy viewing the unspoiled primitive forest in its natural beauty.

We will now be traveling along the **Hokkaido Garden Path**, a drive that takes us through Tokachi. Sit back and enjoy this ride that beholds delightful gardens representing the beauty of Hokkaido. It is a drive that is full of amazing natural environments, scenic views, and mountain ranges. The drive time is approximately 2.5 hours.

On arrival, we will be having **Japanese style lunch** along with a visit at **Shichiku Garden**, which began in 1989, from a wish to bring back the countless wildflowers that had once bloomed in Hokkaido. Here you can see more than 2000 different kinds of flowers in this 60,000 square meters garden and experience the unique beauty of the season.

This famous tourist spot is the creation of Akiyo Shichiku who at the age of 63 took a completely barren lot and began to create her garden, which eventually became a natural field of flowers. Her reason for doing so was “I want to play with flowers all day”.

From here, a visit to **Tokachi Hills**, one of the gardens along the Hokkaido Garden Path. Enjoy free time here to walk around, take in the spectacular views surrounded by three different types of gardens, a colorful border garden, an English style garden and the natural native untouched wildflowers of Tokachi.

We now make our way to our hotel, **Hotel Nikko Northland Obihiro**, conveniently located adjacent to JR Obihiro Station. Our arrival will be by 5:00pm and **Japanese style dinner** will be served at 6pm.



**Obihiro** is Japan's sixth largest city. Nestled in-between the Hidaka and Daisetsuzan mountain ranges, it is known for its beautiful gardens, historical buildings, the popular dish - butadon (pork bowl) as well as its variety of delicious confectionery items. There are a variety of shops and restaurants just steps away. Enjoy the nice long daylight for time on your own.

Being that Obihiro is known for its confectionery items, this might be the perfect time to stock up on omiyage items. Some of the more popular include the Marseille butter sandwich and strawberry chocolate produced by Rokkatei. Another is Takahashi Manjuyu, long established and offering up Japanese muffins filled with sweet bean jam or cheese, served hot. One other to consider is Cranberry, founded in 1972 and famous for its sweet potato cakes and other specialty sweets.

**Accommodations: Hotel Nikko Northland Obihiro** 

### Day 9 – July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Friday – Obihiro-Chitose (B/L)

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 9:00am. It may be our last day on tour, but there is still much to do and see before our flight home later this evening.

Our morning begins with a visit to **Manabe Garden**. This "fairy-tale land" of a garden is known for many remarkable "first in Japan" and "best in Japan" features. The conifer garden here is Japan's first -- and largest. Composed of a Japanese garden, western-style garden, and landscaped garden components, Manabe Garden is a hidden paradise unknown to most tourists.

The garden combines both Japanese and European style architecture amid splendid, lush greenness. At times, you will feel like a Japanese emperor on vacation at a lovely summer resort, while at other moments, a European noble taking a walk in the garden!

Hundreds of exotic tree species, imported from northern Europe and Canada, as well as garden trees are planted among seasonal flowers and plants. Enjoy free time to walk around and enjoy this relaxed and peaceful atmosphere. In summer, tables are set up on the café terrace where you can enjoy a drink and snack.

We now begin our journey heading closer to the Chitose area. The drive time is approximately 3 hours, and we will be making a stop along the way.

Once closer, time for a **buffet lunch** along with a visit to **Yuni Garden**. This colorful British style garden is in a pastoral neighborhood offering a revolving cast of flowers. The spring starts with cherry blossoms and 1 million linaria bloom in the early summer. Lilies blossom at the end of the summer and cosmos fill the garden in the fall. The garden also features many herbs, which visitors can touch and smell as they walk through the garden. The garden shop sells herbal cookies and teas, which make perfect souvenirs.

From here, we'll head to **Aeon Mall Chitose** to complete some last minute shopping.

Now, off to the Chitose Airport for an early arrival to allow free time for some of Hokkaido's finest omiyage shopping. You will also find a variety of restaurants to pick up a dinner bento while waiting on our flight.

**Hawaiian Airlines #442 Departs Chitose 7:50 pm – Arrive Honolulu 8:25 am (same day)**  
**Thank you for traveling with us!**

# Need to Know...



## Payment Policy

- » Reserve with **\$75 per person deposit. Refundable up to 60 days prior to departure date, May 7, 2023.**
- » **Final payment due by May 19, 2023. Package is non-refundable after this date.**

## \* Fares and Fees (Priced in USD)

- » Are subject to change in light of fuel supplements, taxes, and differences in costs.
- » Air ticket fare is guaranteed, but taxes, fees, and fuel surcharges are subject to change until tickets are issued, approximately 45 days out.
- » We reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary with or without notice.



## Special Assistance

- » You must inform us of any disability/impairment that requires special attention at the time of your making the reservation.
- » We reserve the right to cancel the reservation(s) if the disability/impairment is unsuitable for the tour.
- » You are also responsible for any costs and/or accommodations related to your disability/impairment, such as providing your own travel companion.



## Travel Insurance

- » We highly recommend the purchase of trip insurance. Please ask our representatives for more information.



## Travel Documents

- » A valid passport is required for all U.S. citizens and must be valid and not expire at least 6 months from the return tour date.
- » Non-U.S. passport holders must check with the Japanese Consulate to see if a visa is required.



## Land Tour Operator & Costs

- » Land Tour Operator is Nippon Travel Agency.
- » Land Tour costs are based on current currency conversion rates, which are subject to change.



## Other remarks

- » Not Included in the tour: Gratuities for local English speaking guide; additional baggage fee charges from the airlines; alcohol and soft drinks with meals.
- » A minimum of 16 participants are required for the tour to operate.
- » You are expected to abide by domestic and international government and accommodation policies related to health, safety, and welfare.