

Join Panda Travel in...



2025 Tohoku Winter Wonderland and Tokyo Tour

(GP13251)



Ice cleats will be provided for all tour members.

Feb 6 - 15, 2025
8 Nights/ 10 Days

*Tokyo - Aomori - Hirosaki - Oga -
Akita - Kakunodate - Morioka -
Yokote - Matsushima - Sendai*

\$100 OFF PER PERSON
on our completed package when you pay
with a personal check/cash

\$4,298*

per person-triple occupancy

\$4,298*

per person-double occupancy

\$4,598*

single occupancy

pandaonline.com

(808) 734-1961

1017 Kapahulu Ave, Honolulu, HI 96816

**A minimum of 16 participants is
required for the tour to operate**

Itinerary

Day 1: (Thu) Feb 6 – Honolulu Depart Honolulu on Hawaiian Airlines

→ Meet the Panda Travel representative 3 hrs prior to departure at the Hawaiian Airlines check-in counters.

Day 2: (Fri) Feb 7 – Haneda-Tokyo

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free Wi-Fi)

→ Arrive at Haneda Airport. Meet your guide at the arrival lobby and we'll then transfer to **Sunshine City Prince Hotel**. Our hotel is directly connected to Sunshine City shopping center with many shopping and dining options available to you. Nearby, you'll also find a 24-hr Family Mart convenience store and a Seiyu supermarket for snack, bento, and beverage pickups.

Day 3: (Sat) Feb 8 – Tokyo-Aomori-Hirosaki (B/D)

Minamida Onsen Hotel Apple Land (Free Wi-Fi) - [Enjoy onsen](#)

→ Breakfast at hotel.

→ 7:30am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby. We'll transfer by charter coach to Tokyo Station and board a bullet train to Aomori. Your luggage will be delivered to your hotel in Akita the next day. Please prepare an overnight bag for 1 day.

→ 12:29pm – Upon arrival at **Shin Aomori Station**, we're off for a full day of touring.

→ 1:15pm – Now a visit to the **Nebuta Museum Wa Rasse**. Dedicated to Aomori's annual August Nebuta Matsuri festival, this museum showcases beautiful exhibits that tell of the 300 year old festival's history, lore, and traditions. A museum highlight is the Nebuta parade floats; composed of painted washi paper over wire frames, these magnificent lantern floats take one year to construct and are accompanied by teams of taiko drummers, musicians, and dancers during the summer festival.

→ 3:30pm – Today, we'll explore the **Hirosaki Castle Snow Lantern Festival**, which showcases the beauty and charm of traditional Japanese winter festivities. The festival celebrates Hirosaki's rich heritage, drawing locals and tourists alike to appreciate the exquisite snow lantern sculptures and to experience the enchanting festival atmosphere.

→ 5:45pm – Arrive at **Minamida Onsen Hotel Apple Land**. During our stay, unwind in the hotel's apple onsen. The apples are said to benefit your skin, and their delicate scent relaxes your mind and body.

→ 6:30pm – Enjoy a **Japanese-style dinner** at the hotel.

Day 4 (Sun) Feb 9 – Hirosaki-Oga-Akita (B/L)

Hotel Metropolitan Akita (Free Wi-Fi)

→ Breakfast at hotel.

→ 9:00am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby. We'll start our full day tour to Akita.

→ 10:00am – This morning, we begin with a ride on the **Hakkoda Ropeway** (weather permitting) to enjoy magnificent views of the snow-capped mountains and breathtaking pristine snow powdered landscapes. Keep your camera on hand for spectacular photos of the delicate hoar frost, feathery white ice crystals deposited on the ground or attached to leaves and trees. This is without a doubt one of the most prominent features of a typical "winter wonderland" day.

→ 12:30pm – Now stop in Odate, the birthplace of the famous Akita dog, Hachiko, whose statue is located outside Shibuya Station in Tokyo. Welcome to the **Odate Amekkoichi, a Candy Festival** which dates back 400 years. According to folklore, "you will not catch a cold for a year if you eat candy today." Enjoy the 100 candy and food stalls here!

→ 1:30pm – Japanese style lunch at a local restaurant.

→ 2:45pm – Here we are at the **Akita Dog Visitor Center**, modeled after the 1920's Shibuya Station in Tokyo where loyal Hachiko waited patiently for his master. Enjoy free time at the gift shop, which offers Akita dog themed gifts and souvenirs.

→ Drive to Oga City, the central town on the Oga Peninsula.

→ 5:30pm – Once here, a visit to the **Namahage Museum**, dedicated to highlighting the Namahage Festival where young men wear devil's masks and traditional straw garments on New Year's Eve. The men also hold papier mache knives and go door to door admonishing sluggards to mend their ways to ward off misfortune and bring blessings.

→ Now, time to enjoy the **Namahage Sedo Festival**. This festivity combines the tradition of Namahage and the sacred Shinto Ritual of Saitousai. The festival features dramatic performances and rituals where participants dressed as Namahage engage in spirited dances and interact with local residents, creating a unique cultural experience that showcases the rich folklore and customs of the region.

→ 8:15pm – Arrive at **Hotel Metropolitan Akita**, our hotel for the next 2 nights. Centrally located next to the JR Akita Station, our hotel is rife with shopping and dining options.

Day 5: (Mon) Feb 10 – Akita-Kakunodate-Akita (B/L)

Hotel Metropolitan Akita (Free Wi-Fi)

→ Breakfast at hotel.

→ 9:30am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby. Our morning begins with a drive to Kakunodate, a former castle town and samurai stronghold in today's Akita Prefecture.

→ 10:45am – This morning, we'll make a stop at **Ando Soy Sauce & Miso Brewery**. For over 300 years, the Ando family have maintained a stronghold in the Kakunodate community and are legendary in the brewing industry. Designated as one of the city's most important cultural assets, their iconic brick brewery only manufactures naturally brewed and additive-free products with traditional techniques. Sample and shop their famous brews of miso and sauces and take notice of the artworks, textiles, screen paintings on display.

→ 11:45am – While Kakunodate Castle no longer exists, the **castletown of Kakunodate** is seemingly frozen in time, remaining remarkably unchanged since its founding in 1620. Particularly noteworthy landmarks are the Aoyagi and the Ishiguro samurai houses—famed for its size and quality—which offers visitors a rare glimpse into the lives of middle class and wealthy samurai families. Today, we'll be visiting the **Ishiguro House**.

→ 12:30pm – Japanese-style lunch at a local restaurant.

→ 1:30pm – After lunch, enjoy a stroll around **Kakunodate**. Admire the well-preserved Edo period traditional houses ("kura") and explore the tranquil samurai district with its picturesque gardens, providing a glimpse into the rich history and cultural heritage of Kakunodate.

→ 3:30pm – From here, we'll visit **Takashimizu Sake Brewery** for sake tasting. This brewery's sake consists of select Akita rice and water, which results in an excellent taste unique to Akita. Its products have even received the Gold Prize at several annual Japan Sake Awards.

→ 5:00pm – Return to the hotel. Enjoy the evening at leisure.

Day 6: (Tue) Feb 11 – Akita-Morioka (B/L)

Hotel Metropolitan Morioka - New Wing (Free Wi-Fi)

→ Breakfast at hotel.

→ 9:00am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for a full day tour to Morioka.

→ 10:30am – The morning begins with a drive to Morioka and a photo stop at **Lake Tazawa**. Almost perfectly circular in shape, this crater lake is the deepest lake in Japan and changes from sapphire-blue color to shades of jade green and indigo blue depending on the sunlight and season.

Interestingly, the lake also does not freeze in winter. This is a great place to snap a photo of these stunning views.

→ 12:15pm – Established in 1891, **Koiwai Farm** holds significant importance as one of the largest and most renowned farms in Japan, showcasing sustainable agricultural practices and preserving the Tohoku region's farming heritage. The farm's dedication to producing high-quality dairy products, such as fresh milk, cheese, butter, and ice cream, has earned it a well-deserved reputation for excellence.

→ 1:00pm – Japanese-style lunch will be served at **Koiwai Farm**.

→ 2:45pm – Next is a fun visit to **Morioka Tezukurimura**, an artisan's village of workshops dedicated to local craftsmanship. The motto here is "see, touch, and create." As an introduction to traditional Japanese crafts, we'll enjoy a **hands-on experiences: indigo dyeing**.

→ 4:30pm – Arrive at **Hotel Metropolitan Morioka**. Ideally located, the hotel is connected to the JR Station with a variety of dining and shopping options just steps away. The remainder of the afternoon and evening is yours at leisure.

Day 7: (Wed) Feb 12 –

Morioka-Yokote-Matsushima (B/D)

Hotel Matsushima Taikanso (Free Wi-Fi) - Enjoy onsen

→ Breakfast at hotel.

→ 8:30am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby. Your suitcase will be delivered by courier services from Morioka to Tokyo (2 pieces of luggage per person). Please prepare an overnight bag for 1 day.

→ 10:15am – Our morning starts with a drive to Yokote to visit **Yokote Kamakura Museum**. It is dedicated to showcasing and preserving the traditional winter festival known as "Kamakura," which involves the construction of igloo-like snow houses for various cultural activities. The museum provides insights into the history, customs, and significance of Kamakura, featuring exhibits, artifacts, and interactive displays that allow visitors to learn about and experience the unique winter tradition firsthand.

→ 11:15am – Afterwards, proceed to **Akita Furusato Village** where we'll explore and have lunch on your own.

→ 3:30pm – Next, we are off to **Aeon Mall Shinrifu**, one of the largest shopping malls in the Tohoku area, housing a wide range of shopping options, including fashion, electronics, home goods, eateries and more.

→ 5:30pm – Arrive at **Hotel Matsushima Taikanso**. Set on a grassy hilltop overlooking Matsushima Bay, the hotel's onsen is a great place to unwind after dinner and in the

morning before our departure.

→ **6:30pm – Enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel.**

Day 8: (Thu) Feb 13 – Matsushima-Sendai-Tokyo (B)

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free Wi-Fi)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **9:30am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby.**

→ **10:00am** – The morning begins with a **sightseeing cruise with Matsushima Bay Cruise**. Matsushima Bay has been celebrated as one of Japan’s three most scenic views. The bay is dotted with over 200 small islands covered in pines. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the scenic views.

→ **11:30am** – Next, a hands-on **kamaboko making experience**. We’ll go through the process of making and then enjoying the finished product hot off the grill.

→ **1:30pm – Arrive at Sendai Station for our bullet train to Tokyo**. We’ll have free time here to enjoy lunch on your own or bring along a bento box on the train.

→ **4:04pm – Arrive at Tokyo Station**. Once here, a short drive to our hotel.

→ **5:00pm – Arrive at Sunshine City Prince Hotel**. After check-in, the remainder of the afternoon and evening is yours at leisure.

Day 9: (Fri) Feb 14 – Tokyo/Free day at leisure (B)

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free Wi-Fi)

Happy Valentine’s Day!

→ **Breakfast at hotel** – Enjoy the free day to shop and explore Tokyo on your own.

Day 10: (Sat) Feb 15 – Tokyo-Haneda-Honolulu (B)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **9:00am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby.**

→ **9:30am** – This morning begins with a visit to **Tsukiji Outer Market**. A renowned bucketlist spot, Tsukiji is the largest fish market in the world. While the inner auction market relocated in 2018, the charm remains in its outer market. With the 90 mins we spend here, be sure to enjoy all that the outer market has to offer, from seasonal produce and candy tasting to knife-making artisan shops.

→ **12:00am** – Here at **Ameyoko Shopping Street**. This is the perfect place to get your omiyage. “Ameyoko” is short for “Ameya Yokocho” or “candy shop back alley” since candies

were traditionally sold there. Alternatively, it is short for “America,” a callback to the post-WWII era when American products were sold there illegally. Now, the street is lined with over 400 shops from cooked street food, snacks like dried squid, and fresh seafood to clothes, bags, accessories, cosmetics, and much more! Enjoy lunch on your own.

→ **1:45pm** – Now, it’s time to celebrate the annual **Bunkyo Plum Festival** at **Yushima Tenjin** - a popular spot for blossom-viewing since the Edo period. For the Japanese, plum blossoms symbolize vitality, hope, and renewal. Enjoy free time to walk along the beauty of the flowers and view its gorgeous bloom.

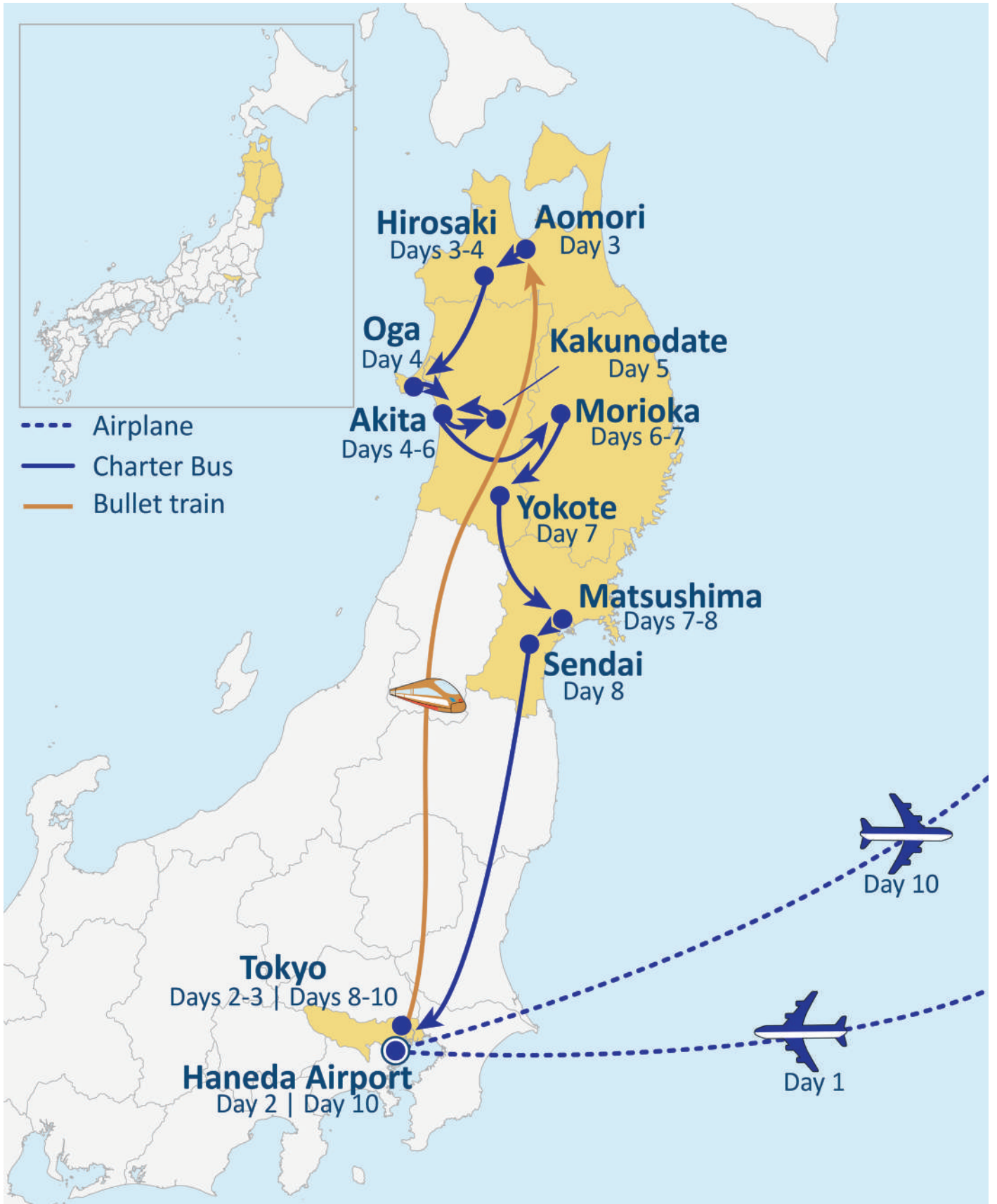
→ **3:30pm** – We’ll stop by **Divercity Shopping Center** on our way to Haneda airport. Located on the artificial island of Odaiba, this unique and massive landmark is one of the best shopping, dining, and entertainment complexes in Tokyo. Don’t forget to take a moment to snap a photo in front of the famous Gundam Statue. Towering at nearly 80 feet high, this figure is the only life sized Gundam statue in the world. Enjoy some last minute shopping and sightseeing at this famous site!

→ **5:30pm – Arrive Haneda Airport to begin our check-in process for the flight home.**

→ **Depart from Haneda via Hawaiian Airlines.**

→ **Arrive in Honolulu (same day).**

Thank you for traveling with us! 



Need to Know...



Payment Policy

- » **Reserve with \$75 per person deposit. Refundable up to 65 days prior to departure date, December 3, 2024.**
- » **Final payment due by December 15, 2024. 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 53 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.