

Join Panda Travel in...



2025 Hokkaido in Bloom: Spring Explorer #2

(GP13387)



May 19 - 27, 2025
7 Nights/ 9 Days

*Haneda - Sapporo - Asahikawa -
Takinoue - Kamiyubetsu - Abashiri -
Lake Akan - Obihiro - Furano - Otaru*

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

\$3,898*

per person-triple occupancy

\$3,898*

per person-double occupancy

\$4,568*

single occupancy

pandaonline.com

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

Itinerary

Day 1: (Mon) May 19 – Honolulu Depart Honolulu

→ Meet the Panda Travel representative 3 hours prior to departure at the airline's check-in counters.

Day 2: (Tue) May 20 – Haneda Airport

Haneda Excel Hotel Tokyo (Free Wi-Fi)

→ Upon arrival at Haneda Airport, meet your local English-speaking assistant at the arrival lobby. Our accommodation for tonight is **Haneda Excel Hotel Tokyo**, conveniently located on the airport grounds. Enjoy your evening at leisure.

Day 3: (Wed) May 21 – Haneda-Chitose-Sapporo (B)

Mercure Hotel Sapporo (Free Wi-Fi)

→ Breakfast at hotel.

→ 8:00am – Depart Haneda to New Chitose Airport via ANA/All Nippon Airways NH53.

→ 9:30am – Welcome to Hokkaido! Upon arrival at **New Chitose Airport**, meet your English-speaking local guide at the arrival lobby to start our tour for Sapporo.

→ 11:00am – Here we are at **Shiroi Koibito Park**, a whimsical theme park with a central mascot that's especially exciting: chocolate! Operated by famed local chocolate company, Ishiya, this theme park is known for its flagship confectionery, a buttery cookie sandwich with a thin white chocolate in between. Be sure to take home some cookies (the best Sapporo souvenirs!).

→ 12:15pm – Now a stop at **Sapporo Central Wholesale Market (Jogai)**. This market offers some of the freshest fish and produce in Japan. At the "Curb Market," you can find approx. 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.

→ 1:45pm – Constructed in 1931, the **Okurayama Ski Jump Stadium** was home to the 90m ski jump competition during the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympic Games and is still used for competitions today. Together, we'll **ride a ski lift** to the peak where a viewing lounge will provide us with a spectacular view of Sapporo, the Ishikari Plain, and Ishikari Bay. This is also the ideal location to see the starting line of the ski jump - look below at the steep slope to put yourself in the skiers' boots right before they begin their jumps!

→ 3:15pm – Join locals in ushering the eagerly awaited spring season at the **Sapporo Lilac Festival!** This celebration is held at Odori Park and will treat visitors to a promenade of colorful flower beds and blooming

trees. Enjoy the festival events, the seasonal beauty and fragrance of Japanese spring flora, and Sapporo's celebrity lilacs. Beyond its designation as the city's official tree, lilac trees also hold a special meaning in the community as its flowers symbolize tranquility, renewal, and happiness.

→ 4:30pm — Arrive at **Mercure Hotel Sapporo**. Our hotel is located just a short walk away from Sapporo's Tanukikoji Shopping Street, the city's oldest covered shopping arcade dating back to 1868. Stretching for 10 blocks, the Tanukikoji features over 200 stores, making it a vibrant hub for shopping, dining, and entertainment in the heart of Sapporo. Enjoy the evening at leisure.

Day 4: (Thu) May 22 – Sapporo-Asahikawa (B)

JR Inn Asahikawa (Free Wi-Fi) - [Enjoy Onsen](#)

→ Breakfast at hotel.

→ 8:30am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for a full day tour to Asahikawa.

→ 9:45am – Along the way, we'll stop at **Sunagawa Highway Oasis**, a large candy-colored shopping center run by Hokkaido's major manufacturers. This fun spot offers many of Hokkaido's specialties such as melons, whole crabs, famous stuffed squid from Hakodate, and Royce chocolates. Browse through souvenir items and take notice of the wooden owls and bears, which are animals the indigenous Ainu people believe the gods inhabit.

→ 11:00am – Next, a visit to the **Takikawa Canola Flower Field**, a breathtaking sea of bright yellow that draws in visitors from around the world and a home to some of the largest crops of canola flowers in Japan. Takikawa primarily harvests 2 types of canola flowers: Kizaki no Natane which (produces rapeseed oil) and Haru no Kagayaki (cultivated as a food source).

→ 1:30pm – Enjoy lunch on your own at **Asahikawa Ramen Village**. Asahikawa is famous for its shoyu-based broth coated with a thin layer of oil, unlike Sapporo's miso-based and Hakodate's salt-based broths. Asahikawa ramen is also distinctive for its thin, hard, and wavy noodles.

→ 3:00pm – Now we are at the acclaimed **Otokoyama Sake Brewery**, which was founded in 1661 and became the official sake-maker for aristocrats during the Edo period. Otokoyama garnered fame as the 1st Japanese sake to earn the prestigious Monde Selection award in 1977 and has won 40+ gold medals internationally since then.

Otokoyama's sake is so spectacular in part because it is brewed using the underground springwater that runs deep beneath the Hokkaido mountains. In addition to learning all about Otokoyama's sake brewing process and rich heritage, you'll have time to sample their world renowned

sake and browse through magnificent sake sets and cups at their gift shop.

→ **4:30pm** – Arrive at **JR Inn Asahikawa**. Our hotel is connected to the JR Asahikawa Station and a direct elevator down to the AEON Mall. The city’s shopping arcade entrance is also steps away. Besides its location, the hotel offers a public bath in a semi-outdoor setting. Enjoy the evening at leisure.

Day 5: (Fri) May 23 – Asahikawa-Takinoue-Kamiyubetsu-Abashiri (B/L/D)

Hotel Abashirikoso (Free Wi-Fi) - [Enjoy Onsen](#)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **8:00am** – **Meet your guide at the hotel lobby before we embark on a drive to Takinoue**, known for its cultivation of various herbs. The town proudly contributes to 95% of Japan’s peppermint production each year—what a remarkable achievement!

→ **10:15am** – Located in Takinoue town, **Shibazakura Takinoue Park** is home to the famous annual Takinoue Shibazakura Festival. Between May and June, the park undergoes a magical transformation; millions of shibazakura (moss phlox) adorn the undulating hills of the expansive 25 acre park with vibrant hues of pink and purple. Unlike the classic sakura cherry blossoms that sway above, shibazakura bloom from the ground, creating a colorful carpet beneath your feet. The flower petals resemble sakura’s shape and may even have a striped pattern. Stroll through this dreamy sea of flowers against the backdrop of Hokkaido’s lush mountainscape. Don’t forget to pay a visit to the park’s onsite shops with specialty goods and local snacks and treat yourself to a delicious cone of Shibazakura soft ice cream.

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

→ **2:30pm** – Calling all tulip lovers! This afternoon, we’ll enter tulip dreamland at **Kamiyubetsu Tulip Park**. Open exclusively from May to early June, the park bursts into a riot of color. With the park’s iconic windmill standing tall in the background, the delicately arranged 1 million tulips of 200 unique varieties that blanket the massive 17 acre field make for an incredible sight to see. This is undoubtedly one of Hokkaido’s must-visit spring destinations.

→ **5:15pm** – Arrive at **Hotel Abashirikoso, followed by a Japanese-style dinner at 6:30pm**. Located on the shores of Lake Abashiri, this hotel features a large public bath, natural hot springs, a sauna, a large indoor bathtub, 2 small indoor bathtubs, and an open-air bathtub.

Day 6: (Sat) May 24 – Abashiri-Lake Akan (B/L/D)

Hotel Lake Akan Tsuruga Wings, Lake view (Free Wi-Fi) -

[Enjoy Onsen](#)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **9:00am** – **Meet your guide at the hotel lobby. Our morning begins with a drive to the town of Abashiri for sightseeing.**

→ **9:15am** – Our morning begins with an excursion to **Abashiri Prison Museum**, the only prison museum in Japan. At this 1890s constructed complex repurposed as an open-air museum, we’ll learn what the living conditions were like in Meiji-era confinement. The museum also highlights some of the detainees’ historical contributions to Hokkaido, such as the construction of the first road to Sapporo.

→ **11:00am** – Next, a visit to the **Okhotsk Ryu-hyo Museum**. Dedicated to showcasing the “ryu-hyo,” or the drift ice that stretches from Siberia to the Sea of Okhotsk during winter, this modern museum provides visitors with a fun, immersive experience. It’s also home to the largest projection mapping display in Hokkaido. In the “Ice Room,” visitors can enter a simulated environment that replicates the freezing temperatures and harsh conditions faced by both humans and wildlife in this region.

→ **12:00pm** – **Enjoy Japanese-style lunch at a local restaurant.**

→ **3:00pm** – Round out our afternoon with a sightseeing **boat cruise** on the pristine waters of Lake Akan. Enjoy the panoramic views that are surrounded by breathtaking natural beauty.

→ Now, we’ll visit the **Marimo Exhibition and Observation Center** to explore the underwater kingdom of marimo, bright green spherical algae that roll along the bottom of Lake Akan. Interestingly, Lake Akan’s marimo is the only region in the world where these algae creatures can grow to a “large size,” which can take more than 100 years. It’s no wonder the marimo of Lake Akan has been designated a National Special Natural Monument in Japan! Fun fact: marimo are well-known Japanese symbols of good luck and everlasting love.

→ **4:45pm** – Arrive at **Hotel Lake Akan Tsuruga Wings**, a stylish and contemporary hot spring Ryokan conveniently situated along the town’s main street: **Ainu Koton**. Before dinner, take a leisurely stroll along Ainu Koton’s shops, many of which stay open late into the evening. You may also find yourself unwinding at the hotel’s famous onsen or browsing through the vast collection of indigenous and local artworks displayed on the hotel lobby floor.

→ **6:00pm** – Tonight, we'll dine on a delightful selection of dishes at the hotel's **buffet dinner**. After our meal, we'll take a short walk to Akan Ainu Kotan Village's theater to watch a traditional **Ainu Traditional dance show**, a beautiful performance portraying the Ainu lifestyle through song and dance.

→ **9:00pm** – After the show, we'll take a brief walk back to our hotel. The rest of the evening is yours to unwind and enjoy.

Day 7: (Sun) May 25 – Lake Akan-Obihiro-Furano (B/D)

Hotel Naturwald Furano (Free Wi-Fi) - [Enjoy Onsen](#)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **8:45am** – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for another fun-filled day of touring.

→ **10:30am** – Our morning begins with a visit to **Ikeda Wine Factory**. Also known as the "Ikeda Wine Castle" for its resemblance to a medieval European castle, this factory is one of Ikeda Town's specialties. Enjoy some free time exploring the exhibition rooms displaying grape cultivation and winemaking techniques, as well as the wine maturation cellars. The factory also features a wine tasting area, a restaurant, and a shop selling wines and other local specialties.

→ **12:15pm** – Along the way, we'll stop at **Michinoeki Otofuke Natsuzora no Furusato**, a rest area in Otofuke town where visitors can explore regional produce, handicrafts, and souvenirs. Enjoy lunch on your own with some time to shop. A tip: try their famous Obihiro specialty - the butadon dish featuring slow-cooked, thick yet tender slices of pork served over steamed rice.

→ **1:30pm** – Our next stop brings us to the iconic **Ryugetsu Tokachi Sweetpia Garden**, the only factory-store of the renowned Hokkaido sweets shop and home to award-winning pastry chefs: Ryugetsu. Visitors and locals alike flock to purchase Ryugetsu's signatures: Sanpouroulu, a striped patterned chocolate cake decorated to resemble a birch log; prize-winning Red Silo cheesecake; and Ezo Meguri roll cake. Not only will we learn about the quality regional ingredients used in producing these special pastries but we'll also enjoy a **hands-on cookie decorating experience** with the experts.

→ From here, we'll drive to Furano.

→ **5:00pm** – Arrive at **Hotel Naturwald Furano**. Enjoy the evening at leisure

→ **6:30pm** – **Buffet dinner will be served at the hotel.**

Day 8: (Mon) May 26 – Furano-Otaru (B)

Grand Park Otaru (Free Wi-Fi)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **9:00am** – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby to start our morning tour around Furano.

→ **9:15am** – Our day begins with a visit to the **Furano Cheese Factory**. Here, we'll observe the local camembert-type cheese production process and nibble on various cheese samples, including the unique squid ink-infused black cheese. The factory also houses a pizzeria and an ice cream parlor where you'll **make your own ice cream**.

→ **10:30am** – Now make a stop at **Campana Rokkatei**, a cafe with stunning views of the Daisetsuzan Volcanoes. Here you'll find snacks, desserts, and souvenirs only available in Furano.

→ **12:45pm** – Grab lunch on your own at **Michinoeki Mikasa**, a popular roadside station known for its diverse eateries and local specialties.

→ **3:00pm** – Our next adventure takes us to **Otaru Sakaimachi Street**, an avenue lined with Otaru's famous glassworks, music boxes, and sweet shops. As we explore this charming district, we'll discover the city's rich cultural heritage and vibrant artisanal scene.

A must visit is the **Kitaichi Glass Shop**, which was once a glass supplier for the Otaru fishing community and is now a store filled with beautiful glassworks. For a sweet time, visit the **Kitakaro confectionery shop** and try the famous multi-layered honey wheeled cakes that have a cult-like following. Delight in a soft serve cone from **Yamanaka Dairy Farm** as you stroll past locally crafted music boxes and glassware or sample fresh local seafood at one of the many restaurants in the area. **LeTAO Plus**, a memorable sweet shop, has 50 varieties of cakes and sweets, a cafe on the 2nd floor, and a free observatory on the 3rd floor.

→ **6:00pm** – Arrive at **Grand Park Otaru**. After check-in, the remainder of the evening is yours at leisure. The hotel is located inside a shopping mall with restaurants and is also within walking distance from AEON supermarket for quick snack, hot food, and beverage pickups.

Day 9: (Tue) May 27 – Otaru-Chitose-Haneda-Honolulu (B)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

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

→ **10:00am** – This morning, we'll explore **Royce' Cacao & Chocolate Town**. This facility (launched in Nov 2022) takes visitors through an immersive factory experience. We'll

learn how cocoa beans transform into chocolate bars, browse through Royce's antique collections, and indulge in the baked sweets, soft serve ice cream, and 200 types of chocolate available at their on-site shop.

→ 1:00pm – Transfer to New Chitose Airport. We'll board an ANA/All Nippon Airways flight NH68 from Chitose to Haneda Airport. Before boarding, round up any last minute shopping at the airport terminal.

→ 5:10pm — Upon arriving at Haneda, our local English-speaking escort will greet us at the arrival lobby. We'll then shuttle to Terminal 3 to begin checking in for our flight home.

→ Arrive in Honolulu (same day).

Thank you for traveling with us! 



Need to Know...



Payment Policy

- » **To secure your reservation, a \$75 per person deposit is required. The deposit can be refunded until March 7, 2025.**
- » **Final payment due by March 18, 2025. 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.
- » 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.