

# 9-Day Hokkaido & Tohoku

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Sapporo, Otaru, Hakodate, Aomori, Matsushima and Sendai...



**Matsushima:** One of the three major scenic wonders in Japan, Matsushima owes its popularity to the hundreds of oddly-shaped rock islands in the bay. All 250 pine tree rock islets have their own unique shapes. Islands vary in size: larger islands have tunnels generous enough for a rowboat to go through while others are uninhabitable. Matsushima is a popular Tohoku destination.



**Hakodate:** As the capital city of Oshima and one of the three open ports in Hokkaido, and is one of the only ways to travel from Hokkaido to Honshu.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

### Luxurious and atmospheric accommodations:

- Five hot spring spa resorts.
  - Stay in hotels popular with locals for their unique features (ocean-front Hakodate hotel rooms, lakeside Towada accommodations, and Matsushima rooms facing the bay).
  - Four evening stays in hot spring hotels (Noboribetsu, Hakodate, Lake Towada, and Tsunagi Onsen) are included.
  - One evening in an herbal hot spring at Matsushima.
  - Each hotel features unique landscapes with splendid views of mountains, oceans, lakes, forests or bays. With their respectively unique water qualities, each hot spring has its unique appeal.

### Special site arrangements:

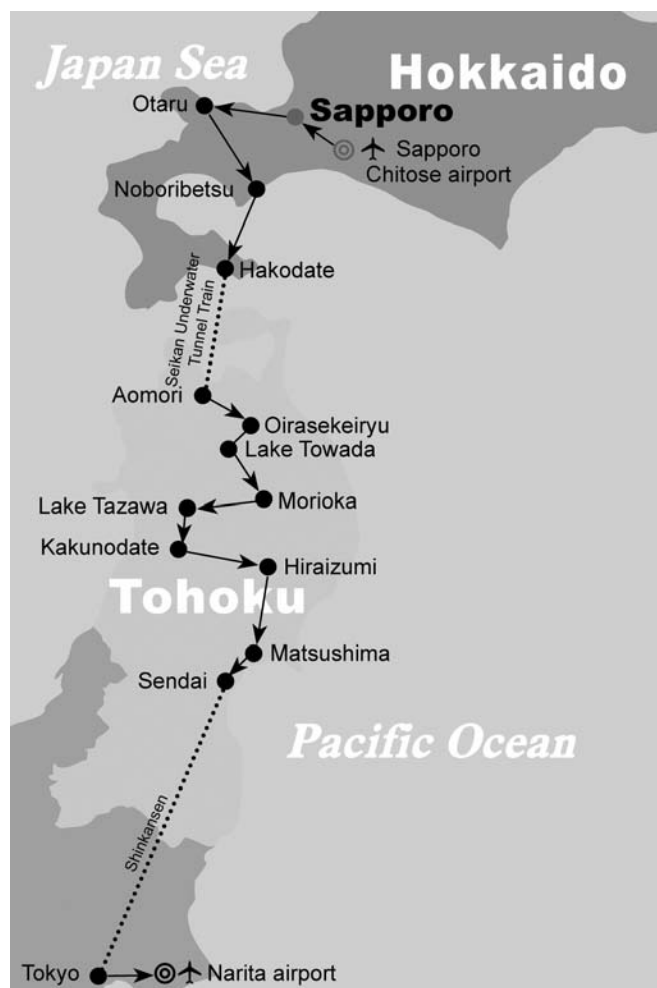
- Take a bicycle tour around the lake at Onuma Seminal Park.
- Shop in a local Hokkaido market at the Hakodate Morning Fair.
- Ride a cable car up Mt. Hakodate to enjoy the evening view featuring a birds-eye perspective of Hakodate's "Million-dollar view"
- Travel on the Seikan Underwater Tunnel train through the longest undersea tunnel in the world.
- Tour Matsushima Bay aboard a sight-seeing boat.
- Take a break at Kanran-tei Pavilion and taste teas while surrounded by the beautiful view of Matsushima Bay.
- Journey on the Shinkansen (Bullet Train) ride to spare the 7 hour drive from Sendai to Tokyo at no extra cost (valued at over 110USD).

### Gourmet meals with local variety:

- Seafood shabu shabu (hot pot)
- Hokkaido seafood grill
- Kani-ryori (crab dishes)
- Mutton shabu shabu (hot pot)
- Seafood buffet in hotel
- Steak set or Unagi-don (eel rice)
- Salmon sushi and hand rolls
- Kaiseki (multi-course) banquet
- Japanese-western cuisine
- Sukiyaki set
- Dragon Palace Japanese-Chinese cuisine

Quick Reference	
Pace	Slow – Fast <span style="display: inline-block; width: 50px; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-left: 5px;"></span>
Walking distance	Short – Long <span style="display: inline-block; width: 50px; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-left: 5px;"></span>
Sightseeing type	Cultural – Natural <span style="display: inline-block; width: 50px; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-left: 5px;"></span>
Ideal for	Families and couples comfortable with Japanese culture and looking for a more in-depth experience.

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**Oirasekeiryu:** Consists of dozens of variously shaped rapids and waterfalls, making it a popular subject for calendars and souvenirs thanks to its scenic beauty.

## TODAY'S TRAVELS

### Day 1 • Depart North America for Sapporo, Japan

#### Day 2 • Arrive in Sapporo

Welcome to the island of Hokkaido, Japan's frontier! Upon arriving at the airport, you will be escorted to your hotel by a Signet representative where you can take time to explore Sapporo city or rest for tomorrow's sightseeing. (D)

**Accommodations:** Renaissance Sapporo Hotel

#### Day 3 • Otaru

Take a morning tour of Otaru's highlights. A romantic city in Hokkaido, Otaru possesses charming scenery including the Otaru Canal and is reminiscent of those old days of romance. Once known as the "Wall Street of Hokkaido," the city today is full of quirky shops. Kitaichi Garasukan (Glass Hall) is a well-known shop of glass souvenirs. The Otaru Music Box Museum, established in 1912, gives you a chance to make your own music box. After lunch, take a city tour of Sapporo's historical highlights including: The Old City Hall, Tokeidai Clock Tower, and Odori Park – site of the famous Sapporo snow festival. (B, L, D)

**Accommodations:** Renaissance Sapporo Hotel

#### Day 4 • Hokkaido

After visiting Hokkaido Shrine in the morning, tour Okurayama Ski Jump, an actual venue of the 1972 winter Olympic Games. At the Winter Sports Museum, where you can experience virtual winter activities such as figure skating, long-jump skiing and race skiing on a variety of modern simulators. Ride up a lift to the ski jump's observation deck, for a birds-eye view of the city of Sapporo and Ishikari Bay. After lunch, learn about the Ainu (natives of Hokkaido) tribes in the Shirai Ainuzoku Village. Visit Jigokudani (Hell Valley), a crater resulting from the eruption of nearby Kuttara volcano, where you can see the boiling and bubbling landscape of hot steam vents. Unwind by relaxing in Noboribetsu resort, known as "the department store of hot springs"; most famous and fascinating for its 11 special kinds of mineral waters. (B, L, D)

**Accommodations:** Noboribetsu Grand Hotel or similar



Hakodate Morning Fair

#### Day 5 • Hakodate

The tranquil surface of Lake Toya, blue and transparent, adds to this volcanic lake a quiet beauty of mystery in the middle of mountains. If weather permits, take a cable car to reach the summit of the volcano, where you can have a panoramic view of Lake Toya, Mt. Yotei and Mt. Shiyowashin, the expansive and beautiful scenery of which contrasts strikingly with the desolate landscape of residuals from volcanic eruptions. Afterwards, immerse yourself in the natural atmosphere by biking along the forest trail at Onuma Semi-National Park. At today's hotel in Yunokawa Onsen, one of the three major hot springs in Hokkaido, take an onsen bath while enjoying a view of the Pacific. You can choose a private hot spring bath in your own room for a Japanese style of relaxation. After dinner, take a cable car up Mount Hakodate, 1,096 ft above sea level, for a view of Hakodate, known as one of the three most beautiful nightscapes in Japan. (B, L, D)

**Accommodations:** Yunokawa Prince Hotel Nagisatei



Shirai Ainuzoku Village

### Day 6 • Hakodate • Aomori

Shop amongst locals at the Hakodate Morning market, where over 400 restaurants and shops feature an assortment of fresh seafood products such as crab, squid, and sea urchin. Afterwards, ride on the Seikan Underwater Tunnel train from Hakodate to Aomori. After arriving in Aomori, travel to the Towada-Hachimantai National Park, which includes Lake Towada, Hachimantai Plateau and the Hakkoda mountains, natural, beautiful and largely untouched. In the park, tour Oirase Keiryu, a stream consisting of variously shaped rapids and waterfalls and Lake Towada, a half-hidden gem in a sea of green forests, the leaves of which change colors to fiery hues of orange as fall comes. (B, L, D)

**Accommodations:** Lake Towada Onsen Kosyutei Hotel

### Day 7 • Morioka • Kakunodate

Today starts with a visit to Morioka Handicraft Village, where you can see the traditional crafts with which northeastern people make pottery or woodwork and even make your own craftwork. The morning is followed by a visit to Lake Tazawa, the deepest lake in Japan (1,389 ft). Visit Kakunodate's Bukeyashiki (samurai mansion) Avenue, where you can be impressed with classic samurai residences with styles dating back several centuries. (B, L, D)

**Accommodations:** Tsunagi Onsen Shion Hotel



**Otaru Music Box Museum:** In Japan, Otaru is known for its music boxes. If you prefer, take pleasure in building your own music box at the museum during your time in Otaru.

### Day 8 • Hiraizumi • Matsushima

After a visit to Chuson-ji Temple in Hiraizumi, travel to Matsushima, one of Japan's three most scenic views. Dotted by poetic pine-clad islets, the Matsushima Bay offers superb and magnificent scenery. The day's highlights proceed with Godaido, a single-story pagoda building built in the forest on an islet, and Kanrantei, the "Water-Viewing Pavilion". Marked by brilliantly detailed murals on the interior walls, Kanrantei was a simple teahouse used by generations of the Date family for such aesthetic pursuits as viewing the moon and watching the ripples on the tide. Special arrangements are made to let you drink ceremonial green tea while sitting on the teahouse tatami and contemplating the beautiful bay view. Our Matsushima tour concludes with a ride on board an inter-island cruise. (B, L, D)

**Accommodations:** Hotel Taikanso

### Day 9 • Depart from Sendai

Transfer to Sendai Station for a Bullet Train ride back to Tokyo. You will be escorted by a Signet Tours representative to Narita International Airport for your respective departure. Sai-yo-na-ra! (B, L)