G Adventures

Last Updated: October 3, 2026

Active Northern Japan: Winter in Hokkaido

9 days, Tokyo to Sapporo

Trip code AJSW

What's included

- Your Welcome Moment: Meet Your CEO and Group
- Your Local Living Moment: Ryokan Stay, Akan-ko

- Your Foodie Moment: Ramen Dinner in Asahikawa, Asahikawa
- Snowshoeing in Shiretoko Five Lakes, Primeval Forest
- Drift Ice Walk
- Free time in Shiretoko & Sapporo
- Sulphur Mountain Visit
- Lake Kussharo Hot Spring Beach
- Lake Mashu Observatory Deck visit
- Traditional Ryokan stay and onsen hotspring
- Local Ramen speciality dinner
- Daisetsuzan Asahidake Ropeway & Hike
- Nijo Market Visit
- Sapporo beer tasting

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing January 16th, 2025 and onwards

Itinerary

NOTE: Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

Day 1 Tokyo/Shiretoko

Welcome to Tokyo, Japan. There's no time to waste as you join your fellow travelers in the morning for a welcome briefing with your CEO and head towards the airport to board your flight to Memanbetsu airport in Hokkaido. Upon arrival, head to your hotel outside Shiretoko National Park and enjoy dinner together with your CEO and new travel mates.

This tour departs from Tokyo today, so if you want to spend more time in Tokyo, consider joining the Active Northern Japan: Winter in Tokyo & Hokkaido.

Please not this tour begins with a flight from Tokyo to Hokkaido. This internal flight is included in the cost of your tour. Please make sure to arrive at your meeting point hotel no later than 10:00 am to ensure you do not miss the flight.

Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner

Accommodation

Shiretoko Daiichi Hotel (or similar) Hotel

Today's Activities

Plane Tokyo – Hokkaidō 1h45m

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

ACTIVITY

Your opportunity to meet your CEO and fellow travellers, and learn more about your tour. Opt to join the group for a local meal afterwards. Don't forget to see the notice in the lobby (or ask reception) for the official time and place to meet up with the group.

Day 2

Shiretoko

After a filling breakfast, depart the hotel en route to the Five Lakes area of Shiretoko National Park. This area is famous for its namesake five lakes that were formed years ago by the eruption of Mount Lo. In the winter, this park is completely blanketed in perfectly white snow and the lakes freeze over. Strap on some snowshoes and hike through the park and over the lakes. In the evening, enjoy a free afternoon to explore Shiretoko.

Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner

Accommodation

Shiretoko Daiichi Hotel (or similar) Hotel

Today's Activities

Snowshoeing in Shiretoko Five Lakes Shiretoko

Explore the snow and ice covered Shiretoko Five Lakes on snowshoes. During the winter, this UNESCO World Heritage Site limits the amount of visitors, so this is quite the special opportunity to explore the stunning white covered mountainous scenery.

Free Time Shiretoko

Spend the afternoon free in Shiretoko.

Day 3

Shiretoko

Another morning snowshoe hike in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shiretoko Peninsula awaits. Embark on a guided four hour snowshoe trek through the Primeval Forest area of the park. Be sure to bring binoculars if you are a keen animal enthusiast, as there is ample opportunity to spot various species from the Steller's sea eagle to Japanese deer and maybe even a flying squirrel. The scenery is equally as dramatic as you witness the cliff edges hang over the turquoise water of the sea. In the afternoon, join a local guide for an incredible adventure across the ice. Walk safely over the drift ice that forms on top of the sea during the winter months and float in the water if you dare.

Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner

Accommodation

Shiretoko Daiichi Hotel (or similar) Hotel

Today's Activities

Snowshoeing in Primeval Forest Shiretoko

Snowshoe through the Primeval Forest in Shiretoko, seemingly untouched by man, especially in when covered in now. Snowshoe through the forest and be on the look out for foxes and deer while admiring the incredible forest and cliff side views. You may even have the chance to see animal prints in the snow or the elusive flyng squirrel.

Drift Ice Walk Shiretoko

Gear up in a special dry suit and join a local guide to walk across the ever changing drift ice floating atop the sea. During the winter months, the ice in Shirtoko becomes nice and solid, allowing you to safely follow your guide through the beautiful winter wonderland. Float in the water if you wish and keep your eye out for the beautiful clione gastropods that travel with the seasonal drift ice.

Day 4 Shiretoko/Akan-ko

Depart Shiretoko this morning and head slightly inland towards Lake Akan. En route stop to visit active volcano Mt Lo, which sits inside the Kussharo caldera. Watch the sulfurous smoke and steam dramatically rise from the wintery craggy landmass. From there, continue on to the shore of Lake Kussharo, where you can take a moment to get your hands dirty digging into the sandy shore and actually hitting hot spring water. Dig your own personal Onsen! Yet another sign of the volcanic activity still present underground in this area. Make a final stop at the observatory deck to take in views of Lake Kussharo and Lake Mashu before continuing on your overnight stay at a Ryokan. After a dinner with your fellow travelers, enjoy a cultural performance in tribute to the history of the local Ainu people of the region. Akan Yukar Lost Kamuy is a presentation of Ainu ancient ceremonial dance, contemporary dance and digital art.

Meals included

Dinner

Accommodation

New Akan Hotel (or similar) Hotel

Today's Activities

Private Vehicle Shiretoko – Akan Mashu National Park 2h 94km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Sulphur Mountain & Lake Kussharo Kussharo-ko

Visit the otherworldly sulphur mountain and breathe in the hot air. See the greenish yellow algae that grows around the fumaroles with a steady stream of steam released across the mountain. The head to Lake Kushharo. With a hot spring under the sand, dig a hole and relax in your hand-dug beachy hot spring.

Lake Mashu Observatory Deck Akan Mashu National Park

Visit the impressive caldera lake within Akan Mashu National Park. Take in the views from the best spot to see whats considered the clearest lake in the world.

Ainu Kotan - Ainu Culture Dance Akan-chō

Visit the Ainu Kotan Village. There are only two indigenous groups remaining in Japan and Akanko Ainu Kotan is one of the largest settlements still remaining in Hokkaido. During our visit, we'll see the village and experience their cultural performance in the evening.

ACTIVITY

Experience traditional Japanese life with a night at a traditional Japanese Inn. Stay in tatami-matted rooms and enjoy a glimpse into Japanese culture and history.

Day 5

Akan-ko/Asahikawa

Enjoy a leisurely start to the morning to spend the morning hours enjoying the Ryokan hot springs a second time. Or choose to join your CEO for a walk around Lake Akan. Then make your way towards Asahikawa. Don't fill up too much during the day, because dinner this evening is the famous Asahikawa ramen. This ramen is famed throughout Japan as one of the best in the country.

Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Accommodation

Hotel Amanek Asahikawa (or similar) Hotel

Today's Activities

Private Vehicle Akan-ko – Asahikawa

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

ACTIVITY

Nearly every region of Japan has their own style of ramen, so a trip to Hokkaido wouldn't be complete without trying Asahikawa specialty ramen. With thin noodles and savory broth, this is a dish you won't want to miss.

Day 6

Asahikawa

It's time to rise and shine and strap on those hiking boots once again. This morning, head to the Daisetsuzan Asahidake Ropeway. Board the ten minute gondola ride up to the start of the walk. Spend a couple of hours exploring the area on foot, and hope for glimpses of the mountain ranges as the fog comes and goes.

It's important to note that in the winter, you can expect snow on the ground at Asahidake, so itinerary adjustments may be made. Cold weather clothing should be packed during this season.

Meals included

Breakfast

Accommodation

Hotel Amanek Asahikawa (or similar) Hotel

Today's Activities

Daisetsuzan Asahidake Ropeway & Hike Asahikawa 1h30m 1km

Visit Daisetsuzan National Park and ride the gondola up to start your hike around Sugatami Pond Loop. This easy, loop hike will give you astounding views of volcanic rock and Mount Asahi-dake, the tallest mountain in Hokkaido reflecting off ponds. After the hike, take the gondola back down.

Day 7 Asahikawa/Sapporo

Sapporo, the capitol of Hokkaido, is home to some of the island's most interesting spots. With a day at leisure, choose to join your CEO to visit the Hill of the Buddha, a incredible and huge shrine. Or, choose to explore the Hokkaido Jingu shrine, a shinto shrine honoring 4 deities.

Accommodation

The B Sapporo (or similar) Hotel

Today's Activities

Local Train Asahikawa-eki – Sapporo Station

Climb aboard, take your seat, and get around like the locals do.

Free Time Sapporo

Spend a free afternoon in Sapporo.

Optional Activities - Day 7

Hokkaido Jingu Shrine Sapporo

Visit the important Hokkaido Jingu Shrine, the resting place of four different kami (deities) of the Shinto religion. Come to the shrine and walk through torii (Japanese gates), write your wish on a wooden plaque and buy a lucky charm. This shrine is one of the best places to witness the four season of Japan. As one of the most renowned places to see cherry blossoms in the spring, fall leaves in autumn, green and colorful in the summer and snow covered in the winter.

Hill of the Buddha Sapporo

Visit the beautiful and massive Hill of the Buddha outside Sapporo. A metro ride and bus ride brings you to this incredible location. Covered in snow in the winter or covered in flowers in the spring, this place is a must see no matter the season.

Day 8 Sapporo

Spend today getting well acquainted with the city of Sapporo, home of the world famous beer. Begin your day with a visit to the Nijo Market. Walk through the stalls full of fresh seafood, most caught right of the coast of Hokkaido. You'll see crabs, fish and things you may have never seen before like fresh urchin and fish eggs. Afterwards, head to the home of the first Japanese made beer, Sapporo Beer Museum, and sample beer that can only be found at this location.

Meals included

Breakfast

Accommodation

The B Sapporo (or similar) Hotel

Today's Activities

Sapporo Beer Testing Sapporo

Visit the Sapporo Beer Museum for a tour and tasting of the popular brew. Known as the first beer made in Japan, we'll have a chance to sample a beer that can only be found at the museum. Opt for a fun all-you-can-eat-and-drink meal in the Beer Hall.

Nijo Market Sapporo

Visit Nijo Market, a market over 100 years old. You'll see fresh local seafood like urchins and salmon eggs, and other local vendors.

Day 9

Sapporo

Depart at any time.

Meals included

Breakfast

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What are the main highlights of this trip?

Snowshoe through the powder-covered Shiretoko Five Lakes and Primeval Forest, Soak in a soothing onsen at a traditional ryokan for ultimate relaxation, Discover the culture of northern Japan's Indigenous Ainu people with a visit to Ainu Kotan Village.

What are the main highlights of this trip?

Snowshoe through the powder-covered Shiretoko Five Lakes and Primeval Forest, Soak in a soothing onsen at a traditional ryokan for ultimate relaxation, Discover the culture of northern Japan's Indigenous Ainu people with a visit to Ainu Kotan Village.

Is there a travel disclaimer for my itinerary I should review before booking this trip?

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

What is the role of the group leader during this trip?

This G Adventures group trip is accompanied by one of our group leaders, otherwise known as a Chief Experience Officer (CEO). The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects.

We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

What is the maximum and typical number of participants on this tour?

Max 16, avg. 14

What meals are included in this trip?

7 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 5 dinners

What are the modes of transportation on my trip?

Plane, private vehicle, local train, walking, snowshoe.

Where will we stay during the trip?

Hotels (7nts), Ryokan stay (1nt)

If I choose to purchase My Own Room, are there any exceptions during the trip?

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops

What should I expect from the accommodations on this trip?

Hotels (7nts) Traditional Ryokan Stay (1nt)

What are the joining instructions?

For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

If you would like to book an airport Arrival shuttle for your tour, please contact our Sales Team or your Travel Agent in advance of travel.

If you have paid in advance for an arrival shuttle, our driver will be waiting for you with a sign with your name on it outside of the luggage hall. If for any reason you are not met at the airport, please call Emergency Phone number: +81 90 1223 2336 or +81 80 6779 1851

MEETING POINT:
Please refer to your Voucher for specific hotel meeting point

WELCOME MEETING TIME: 09:30am

You will meet your group at the meeting point in Tokyo at 09:30am heading towards the airport to board your flight to Memanbetsu airport in Hokkaido. Make sure to arrive to Japan with ample time to arrive at the meeting point to ensure you don't miss the departure time. Enquire about booking a pre-night hotel if you choose to arrive the day before.

Who do I contact for arrival issues or in the event of an emergency?

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

AIRPORT TRANSFER
If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change or flight cancellation within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, please call the emergency contact number to advise of your new arrival flight information. If you do not, we will not be able to rearrange your arrival transfer and you will need to make your own way to the starting hotel at your own expense. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS
G Adventures Local Office (Japan)
During office hours: Mon-Fri (Excluding national holidays) 9:00-18:00 Local Time
From outside Japan: 1st contact +81 3-6809-1212. (2nd contact +81 90 1223 2336 or +81 80 6779 1851)
From within Japan: 1st contact 03-6809-1212 (2nd contact 090 1223 2336 or 080 6779 1851)

After office hours emergency number
Primary phone: +81 90 1223 2336 or +81 80 6779 1851 (from within Japan: 090 1223 2336 or 080 6779 1851)

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below which will connect you directly with our Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found here.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100
Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000
Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618
Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307
Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

What should I pack for this trip?

Cold Weather:

- Long-sleeved shirts or sweater
- Scarf
- Warm gloves
- Warm hat
- Warm layers
- Warm waterproof jacket

Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

Essentials:

- Footwear (required) (Closed toe suggested)
- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/ wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Hat
- Headphones (Noise-cancelling recommended)
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

Health & Safety:

- Face masks (Clients will be only be required to wear a face mask where it is mandated by local regulations.)
- Hand sanitizer
- Pen (Please bring your own pen for filling out documents.) Note: We highly recommend bringing hiking poles, as walking in snow can be more difficult or slippery.

What are the visas and entry requirements for my trip?

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page here

What are the tipping guidelines for this trip?

Tipping for service is not practiced in Japan. Leaving money at restaurants, in taxis etc will simply cause confusion.

Tipping within the travel industry is standard to recognize the guide for a great experience. Our CEOs work hard to make your trip special. If you're happy with their service, a tip of $5–$7 per day is a great way to say thanks, though the final amount is completely up to you.

What activities are optional on this trip?

Sapporo

- Hokkaido Jingu Shrine
- Hill of the Buddha

What general safety tips and free-time guidelines should I follow?

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewelery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it deemed necessary, due to safety concerns. Your Chief Experience Officer (CEO) will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy and explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards), have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk. Read more about travel safety for ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling.

What are the mandatory group rules regarding laws and behaviour?

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of people in the sex trade is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they utilize the services of paid sex workers, in any capacity.

What is Planeterra?

Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.
G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with Planeterra Foundation.

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating $1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

What are the age restrictions for this trip?

You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a G Adventures tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

Are international flights included in this trip?

No, international flights are generally not included in the price of your tour.

However, on some tours travelling between two different countries, international flights are included as part of the itinerary and price of the tour. Please speak to your GCO or booking agent for further details.

In addition, check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.

What should LGBTQ+ travellers know about safety and travel considerations on this trip?

The safety and well-being of all of our travelers is a priority at G Adventures and that includes our travelers who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. We recognize that there are specific concerns and questions you may have about your adventure in terms of safety and security. We encourage you to visit our LGBTQ+ page for useful resources to ensure you feel safe and comfortable throughout the duration of your trip. The Equaldex tool linked on this page can be of particular help when deciding where you may want to visit next.

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