

JA-POW!

HOKKAIDO'S PERFECT POWDER SNOW

Discover the incredible powder snow of Japan's world-famous snowsports capital on the volcanic slopes of Hokkaido



JAPAN
Journeys



TOUR INFORMATION

Tour highlights

This unique tour has been crafted to cater to adventurous souls, with 12 days around Hokkaido, Japan's snowy north, and a little time in Tokyo for good measure. You'll visit Sapporo, the island's capital city, and take in three exceptional ski resorts in your quest for the "Japow" - Hokkaido's endless blanket of perfect, powdery snow that has earned cult status worldwide.

Wonderful winter sports

Hokkaido is a skiing- and snowboarding Mecca for professionals and enthusiasts alike. Its resorts, clustered around looming mountain ranges, are on every expert's list of must-see snowsport destinations.

It's all thanks to the Holy Grail of winter sports, that exquisite powder snow. Thanks to the cold winds that blow in over the ocean from Siberia, Hokkaido's low-humidity conditions are ideal all season long. All levels of experience are welcome, and there are activities for everyone, from tree-skiing, sledding and snowmobile tours to hot-air balloon rides.

Breathtaking scenery

Japan's top ski resorts are a yearly pilgrimage for those who love perfectly manicured slopes, back-country adventures and off-piste trails that cling to the stunning volcanic terrain. Hokkaido is blessed with huge stretches of unspoiled forests, National Parks and towering mountains bursting out of the landscape.

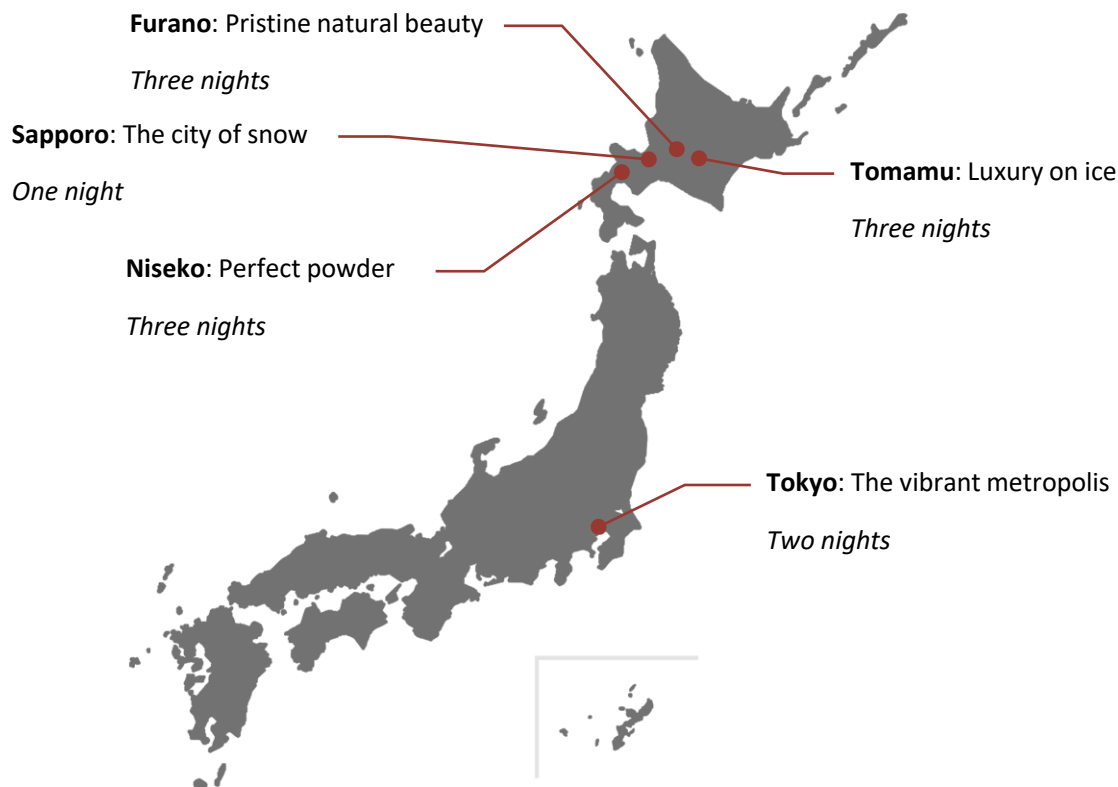
Après-ski like nowhere else

It wouldn't be a Japanese ski resort without traditional onsen. These natural hot springs bubble beneath Hokkaido's earth, drawing up cleansing, pure water for an authentic and purifying bathing ritual. Each hotel we've selected features a spa with bespoke treatments and top service. You'll be taken care of each step of the way.

Taste exquisite cuisine

Nourishing, seasonal dishes and premium produce are the hallmark of Hokkaido cuisine. You'll be introduced to the true culinary delights of the land and sea: fresh, exceptional seafood, mountain herbs and vegetables, hand-reared and wild meat sourced locally, and the wholesome, warming soup curries and handmade bowls of ramen and broth that feature on many a menu. Hokkaido is host to numerous Michelin-starred restaurants, and you'll be given the opportunity to sample more than just one. Stop by your hotel's lounge bar for exciting cocktails fashioned by skilled bartenders, sip a warming sake by the fireside and learn something new at a tour of Japan's most famous whisky distillery.

TOUR INFORMATION



Duration:

14 days / 12 nights

Arrival:

Fly into Tokyo Haneda Airport, connecting to New Chitose Airport on Hokkaido

Departure:

Depart from Tokyo Haneda Airport

Perfect for:

A romantic escape, a family adventure or a group getaway, catering to all levels of experience

When to visit:

The snows are best between December and March

TRAVEL ITINERARY

Day 1: One step closer

Your journey begins at London Heathrow, where you'll take an overnight flight. Watch the lights of the city fade out of view, rest up and enjoy dinner provided onboard.

Day 2: Sapporo, blessed by snow

Your flight descends after breakfast, in the early hours of day two at Tokyo Haneda Airport, from where you'll be taken to the domestic terminal. After customs clearance and the airport shuttle you'll swiftly board your second and final flight to New Chitose Airport in Hokkaido.

You'll take a private car to dinner in Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido, at Jingsukan Daruma for "jingsukan" - which literally means "Genghis Khan". This is a Hokkaido speciality of freshly grilled lamb and vegetables cooked on tabletop barbecues.

You'll be transported to your hotel for the evening, the four-star JR Tower Nikko Sapporo. This is the highest building in Hokkaido, ensuring fantastic views of Sapporo at night. Facilities include a sky resort spa featuring a natural hot spring for those who want to unwind in a little extra luxury after the day's travels, while the Lounge Lobby and the Bar are perfectly cosy spots to relax and watch the world go by with a nightcap.



TRAVEL ITINERARY

Day 3: The city melts away

After an excellent buffet breakfast in the hotel, dining on Hokkaido's freshest ingredients and enjoying the morning views of the snow-capped mountains that surround the city, we encourage you to take a stroll around Sapporo. Wander through Odori Park, the tree-lined oasis at the heart of the city, the Botanic Garden of Hokkaido University, the Sapporo Beer Museum, or learn a little history at the Clock Tower (the Tokeidai) - a symbol of progress and the birth of the city. If you want to indulge in a spot of light shopping, head downtown to the Tanukikoji shopping street, which houses around 200 shops and boutiques under its roofed arcade.

Lunch options are plentiful, ranging from locally popular homestyle restaurants such as Okushiba Shoten, Suage 2 or Soup Curry Garaku for the traditional "garaku" soup curry, to rich, savoury homemade ramen bowls at the tiny local favourite Shirakaba Sansou. If you're feeling a pinch more decadent, why not head to Michelin three-star French restaurant Molière for an inventive lunch menu of mountainside harvests and delights such as Hokkaido deer and local beef?

Suitably refreshed, you'll be whisked a couple of hours away by car to the foothills of Mt Furano, where you'll arrive at the four-star Shin Furano Prince Hotel by mid-afternoon. Situated at the very centre of the action, it provides incredibly easy access to all of the resort's slopes. You'll have a couple of hours to settle in and explore the area before dinner. If you want to pick up a souvenir or view local crafts, next to the hotel is Ningle Terrace: a fairy tale-like gathering of shops inside snow-kissed log-cabins nestled between the trees, best visited after dusk.

Dinner will be served at the hotel, and if you feel like continuing your evening, the lounge bar on the very top floor serves spectacular views and signature cocktails. The hotel's cosy Soh's BAR is a couple of minutes away, hidden away in the peaceful, snowy forest.



TRAVEL ITINERARY

Day 4: Dive right in

Your first morning in Furano is an exciting one; it's time to hit the slopes! After a hearty breakfast at the hotel, you'll be ready for the joys of this bewitching winter wonderland.

With 28 courses to suit all abilities, Furano is moderately sized, so you can get stuck in right away without spending ages travelling around between slopes. From the highest point, 1,074m above sea level, there are stunning views of Mount Tokachi and the Daisetsuzan National Park's glorious mountain range. Many herald the snow here as the best in Japan, if not the world! The Snowboarding World Cup has been held here twice, and the FIS Alpine World Cup an astonishing 10 times. Furano itself is a friendly, bustling Japanese town that's rightly proud of its cultural heritage. For lunch, there's no shortage of options. There are around 100 small restaurants to choose from, including sushi, noodle bars, Japanese pubs known as "izakaya", Mongolian BBQs, curries and classic western steak houses. The hotel itself has excellent catering, with two Japanese restaurants and four western ones, including a generously varied dinner buffet for those who want to sample a little of everything! A modern Italian restaurant is the most recent addition.

Dinner will be up to you this evening – take a moment beforehand for a dip in the healing “Shisai no Yu” hot springs for a restorative soak to ease any tired muscles.

Day 5: Settling in on the slopes

Breakfast will be served at the hotel, so prepare yourself for your second day of winter sports in charming Furano. Today could be the day to try a hot-air balloon ride for a 360° bird's-eye view of the silver mountains and the Furano Basin. Lunch will be left up to you, so pick from multiple choices at the hotel or make a short five-minute drive into town and try something new.

There's plenty to do aside from skiing: ice-hole fishing, snowshoe trekking, cat skiing and dog-sled rides are all available for you to try!



For dinner you're welcome to explore. Consider the highly regarded French restaurant bi.blé, or the Furano Wine House for fantastic steak and wine, and the popular MASAYA for teppanyaki. You might prefer to unwind with a beer or a warm sake at an izakaya before hitting one of the numerous karaoke bars if the mood strikes. Otherwise a visit to the picturesque Snow Night Fantasy right next to the hotel is a must for its dog sledding, snow tubing and a café made entirely out of ice!



Furano Facts

Slopes	28 pistes divided into two areas, Furano Zone and Kitanomine Zone
Lifts	Multiple ski lifts, two gondolas, one ropeway
Resort summit	1,074m
Snowfall	Up to 9m per year
Steepest slope	34 degrees
Longest glide	4,000m
Other	Ski lessons and English-speaking guides available

[Trail Map](#)

TRAVEL ITINERARY

Day 6: Tomamu Awaits

After a final breakfast at your hotel, you'll be driven to the Hoshino Resorts site in Tomamu roughly 90 minutes away for your next adventure. Arriving after a quick stop for lunch, you'll be greeted by luxury at the five-star Hotel Risonare Tomamu. Each suite in this beautifully decorated 32-storey hotel is at minimum 100m². They are all furnished with a private sauna and a jet bath with a magnificent view of the local scenery. If you're aching for some down-time, the hotel's peaceful library cafe has wide windows peering out over the snow-covered surrounds.



Dinner is up to you - and you won't be short of options. There are around 20 restaurants in the hotel, offering everything from full-course menus to casual cafe food. Why not enjoy dining at Otto Sette, with a fabulous wine list and a contemporary, authentically Italian menu? The main restaurant hosts an opulent buffet, full of fresh local seafood and seasonal ingredients, or try SORA for wagyu and seafood "shabu-shabu" - that's aromatic Japanese hot pot.

This modern, high-class ski resort is the first-ever ski-in ski-out village created in Japan and the largest residential-style snow resort in Hokkaido. Tomamu is especially well-known for its amazing tree skiing and off-piste trails, across a site that covers almost 2,500 acres. With 29 courses, it's one of the top-end skiing destinations in Hokkaido, and if you visit in March don't miss the mobile champagne bar on sunny days!

The famed night-time Ice Village lasts from mid-December to mid-March, and features an ice bar, an ice rink, and beautiful snow and ice sculptures. Entry is free for hotel guests.

Day 7: The lap of luxury

Wake up to wonderful views of natural Hokkaido, and fortify yourself with Risonare's premium breakfast buffet - try the buttery, savoury miso corn ramen for a traditional local taste. If you're hungry for the powder, you can head straight for the slopes from the hotel's position at the base of the resort.

You could alternatively take advantage of the free gondola ride up to Tomamu's best viewpoint, the Cloud Walk, disembarking at over 1,000 metres above sea level. Walk amongst the clouds along the suspended deck at Muhyo Terrace, nicknamed Hoarfrost Terrace for the remarkable frozen fog visible on the trees below. Cosy up with a hot drink or soup at Kumo Café and gaze out at the awe-inspiring panorama of snow-dusted forests and the majestic Hidaka Mountains.

After lunch at one of the many nearby eateries, flawless snow awaits. Beyond that, you might prefer bathing in a clarifying onsen, or the heated, glass-walled Mina Mina Beach wave pool at the hotel. Before (or after, or both!) you find dinner, dip into "Kirin-no Yu", an open-air outdoor bath attached to Mina Mina: it's a late-opening hot relaxation pool with a view of the clear, star-filled night sky, and the ultimate spot to breathe in that fresh mountain air.

Day 8: Tremendous Tomamu

On your last day in Tomamu, breakfast in style and make the most of this amazing resort. Lunch and dinner decisions are yours, so treat your tastebuds at one of the resort’s quality venues. You might want to pick up a souvenir at the gift shop, take a horse ride through deep snow or recharge with an aromatherapy massage and body treatment in the hotel spa - or you may just enjoy another full day out on the pistes!



Tomamu Facts

Slopes	29 pistes
Lifts	Chairlifts, one gondola
Resort summit	1,171m
Snowfall	Up to 14m per year
Steepest slope	35 degrees
Longest glide	4,200m
Other	Ski lessons and English-speaking guides available

Trail Map

TRAVEL ITINERARY

Day 9: Niseko powder

It's time to say goodbye to Tomamu - after an early breakfast you'll be delivered by private car to a sumptuous seafood lunch at Suttu Oyster Village, around four hours away. Facing Suttu Bay on the Sea of Japan, this is a revered seafood restaurant with a focus on the plump, mineral-rich native oysters and a seasonal menu of delicacies such as wild-caught sea urchin, abalone, whelks, snow crab and hand-dived scallops. This is an opportunity to indulge in a generous amount of the very best and freshest seafood.



There's another short car ride before you arrive by early afternoon at the legendary Niseko. This resort is known the world over - it's the first that comes to mind for many an international powder fiend. It has the magical ability to capture the lion's share of snowfall - 15 metres on average each year!

Pulling up to the Hilton Niseko Village, you'll notice that it faces the slopes directly, with handy ski-in ski-out access from the foot of Mt Annupuri. It's 10 minutes to the mountaintop via the adjacent gondola. The hotel's indoor and outdoor pools are fed by natural hot springs and boast the best views of the rugged façade of Mount Yotei.

You'll dine at the buffet restaurant in your hotel later on, but first there are a few hours to investigate on foot - or by ski. Niseko United is the largest of the resorts in Japan, covering over 1,000 acres, split between four resorts connected at the peak of Niseko Annupuri: Niseko Hanazono, Niseko Grand Hirafu, Niseko Village and Niseko Annupuri.

TRAVEL ITINERARY

Day 10: A world-class experience



Wake up in the powder capital of the world and make your plans over a tasty breakfast in the buffet restaurant. Niseko United's Shuttle Bus is free to holders of a Niseko United All Mountain Pass, which covers all four resorts – so you can enjoy every delight that the area has to offer.

As to be expected at Japan's biggest ski resort, the variety of off-piste activities is equally huge. Firm visitor favourites include Hanazono Tube Park, some gnarly backcountry tours and the scenic snowmobile rides through clouds of fine powder.

On top of all that, Niseko really is a foodie paradise. You might choose to take lunch and dinner at your hotel, where there is a varied selection of restaurants. Enjoy select prime cuts from the Melt Bar and Grill, fresh sushi rolls and sashimi at Rera Sushi or watch the chefs at work on the teppan counter at Pirka Teppanyaki.

Further afield, each resort has more than a handful of great restaurants, but Hirafu wins the culinary competition with its abundant restaurant scene and the exquisite French-Japanese restaurant KAMIMURA - which has deservedly held onto its Michelin star since 2017. There are plenty of less formal venues scattered around: try traditional and lovingly-made sushi at Satou and Hanayoshi Sushi, hand-cut noodles at tiny Rakuichi Soba or wood-fired pizza baked to order at Pizza Del Sole. The variety of cuisine in Niseko will be a highlight of your trip!



TRAVEL ITINERARY

Day 11: Recreation and relaxation

It's your final day in captivating Niseko. Post-breakfast, the alluring Mt Annupuri beckons, so don your gear for the last leap onto those gloriously snowy trails. Decide on lunch and dinner at your leisure.

If you haven't yet, this will be your last chance to enjoy the dynamic nightlife in Niseko. Annupuri and Niseko Village have a few lively bars, but Hirafu Village is the centre of attention for visitors who like to play off-piste as much as they do on. The full range is here - from warming izakayas for a gentle beer or two, to sophisticated wine bars and buzzing late-night venues with live music and DJs.



Hanazono Facts

Slopes	11 pistes
Lifts	Chairlifts, one gondola
Resort summit	1,308m
Snowfall	Up to 15m per year
Steepest slope	30 degrees
Longest glide	4,550m
Other	Ski lessons and English-speaking guides available



© Niseko Hanazono Resort

Hanazono arguably has the best snow quality of the four. While they all have that classic, fine-textured powder, Hanazono offers a little more protection from inclement weather conditions with its north-easterly orientation. Its sprawling terrain park is popular with freestyle skiers and snowboarders.

The new 10-person Hanazono Symphony Gondola whisks guests nearly a mile up to the summit in just five minutes, introducing two new courses for the 2021/22 season – one for beginners, and one for those of intermediate level. The quad chairlift has just been renovated, meanwhile: think plush, heated leather seats and footrests.

[Trail Map](#)

Grand Hirafu Facts

Slopes	22 pistes
Lifts	Chairlifts, one gondola
Resort summit	1,200m
Snowfall	Up to 15m per year
Steepest slope	44 degrees
Longest glide	5,300m
Other	Ski lessons and English-speaking guides available

Grand Hirafu is the largest of the four, the beating heart of Niseko United, where most of the bars, restaurants, cafes and facilities are located. A buzzing nightlife can be found there after dark. It hosts the most runs, and offers some great off-piste options: excellent tree skiing and more open backcountry terrain. It specialises in night skiing, with eight stunning courses considered among the best in Japan – and well lit to catch the incredible scenery going past.

[Trail Map](#)

Niseko Village Facts

Slopes	27 pistes
Lifts	Chairlifts, one gondola
Resort summit	1,170m
Snowfall	Up to 15m per year
Steepest slope	32 degrees
Longest glide	5,000m
Other	Ski lessons and English-speaking guides available

Niseko Village is by far the easiest to move around in and it's the first point of access from your hotel using the ski-in ski-out route. The lower part is more mellow, and ideal for beginners, while the upper area has steep gorges and slopes - it's extremely popular with advanced skiers and snowboarders. There are plenty of carefully monitored backcountry routes for more rugged, challenging exploits. The length of some of the runs makes for a perfect powder cruise with incredible views of Mt. Yotei, an active volcano known as the Mt Fuji of Hokkaido.

[Trail Map](#)

Annupuri Facts

Slopes	13 pistes
Lifts	Chairlifts, one gondola
Resort summit	1,156m
Snowfall	Up to 15m per year
Steepest slope	34 degrees
Longest glide	4,300m
Other	Ski lessons and English-speaking guides available

The smallest of the four, Annupuri is the place to focus on the pure joy of skiing and snowboarding. It's gentler and lower than the other three parts of Niseko, but it has a relaxing character to suit beginners, while there are more backcountry runs here than at any of the other three Niseko resorts.

[Trail Map](#)

TRAVEL ITINERARY

Day 12: Excite your tastebuds

Leaving the slopes behind, you'll eat breakfast early and travel just over an hour away to the famed Nikka whisky distillery in Yoichi. You'll meet an English-speaking guide at the entrance and follow the whisky-making process from start to finish, learning the history of Nikka and the similarities between Yoichi's wild landscape close to the sea and the Scottish Highlands that so inspired its founder.

Next, you'll depart for the historical port city of Otaru. You've some time before lunch, so take a walk around the nostalgic atmosphere of the beautiful Otaru Canal, once a key part of the city's busy trade industry, and now lined with charming old warehouses and filled with artists' displays.

Lunch is provided in spectacular fashion at the Michelin-starred Isezushi. Delight in a delectable sushi offering made exclusively from premium Hokkaido ingredients. Enjoy the minimalist and serene decor as the chef meticulously prepares each plate in front of you at the counter. Try Otaru's local speciality, uni - that's sea urchin - and the lovingly-crafted nigiri (fresh-sliced seafood on small rice mounds) with sake pairings.

Then it's on to New Chitose Airport next for a late afternoon flight to Haneda Airport in Tokyo, where you'll stay for the next two nights. It's a quick transfer to the four-star Akasaka Excel Hotel Tokyu (or another hotel of equivalent quality), where you'll arrive in time for a late dinner. If you want to stretch your legs and try a neighbourhood restaurant, the staff will have excellent local recommendations. Alternatively, this grand hotel has excellent dining options of its own - you can choose from the buffet experience or order à la carte.

Day 13: The greatest city in the world

A generous breakfast will be served at your hotel, setting you up for a busy day in this eclectic world city. First thing, you'll alight on the Hato Bus Tour for a full day of sightseeing, pausing for a Japanese-style BBQ lunch.

You'll experience Japan's traditional culture with visits to the gardens at Happo-en and Chinzan-so, a demonstration of the tea ceremony, and a look at one of the best and oldest bonsai collections in Japan. You will also discover Tokyo from the water with a serene cruise along the Sumida River which winds through the heart of the city, observing the blend of progressive and traditional architecture that makes this sprawling metropolis so unique.

Dinner is up to you tonight. Your hotel is right in the centre of modern Tokyo and the area is widely renowned for its excellent eateries, spanning the full range of traditional Japanese cuisine, from donburi rice bowls, crispy tonkatsu and sushi, to sake bars and juicy yakitori skewers. You'll also find impressive international cuisine in this culinary capital.

Day 14: Homeward bound

It's time to say sayonara to Japan. After a hotel breakfast, you'll begin the homeward journey to London Heathrow. It's a quick transfer to Haneda Airport and then you'll board your return flight. You'll have time to reflect on your wonderful experiences as you watch the cityscape disappear.

TOUR DETAILS

Price from £6,495.00 per person based on a Twin/Double room occupancy

Excluded dates: 20th December 2022 until 2nd January 2023

Price Includes:

- 12 nights at 4* or 5* hotels
- Meals: 12 hotel breakfasts, two lunches, three dinners
- English-speaking guides on day 2, 12 and 13
- Entrance and activity fees: Per itinerary
- Ski pass: Eight days (Furano two days, Tomamu three days, Niseko three days)
- Local transport: Bus and private car, per itinerary
- Domestic flights from New Chitose Airport to Haneda Airport

NOT included in the price:

- International flights
- Domestic flights between Haneda Airport and New Chitose Airport
- Drinks
- Certain meals, per itinerary
- Personal expenses
- Other items not mentioned in the itinerary

WHAT NEXT?

If you're interested in this itinerary, please let us know the following and we will get back to you with a quote:

- Your proposed dates of travel
- Your preferred grade of accommodation (4* or 5*)
- Your preferred room type (e.g., Double, Twin or Singles)
- How many adults and children this is for (and the age of the children at the time of travel)

NOT FROM THE UK?

Don't worry! We deal with countless passengers from outside of the UK. You just need to let us know the information above (and you can arrange your own flights to Japan).

To find out more, call one of our specialists now on 020 7766 5267.

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