



## **SAMURAI TOURS**

*Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan*

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# **Northern Tohoku and Western Hokkaido Mini Tour**



8 Day/7 Nights

# Northern Tohoku and Western Hokkaido Mini Tour

## Tour Overview

Leave behind the busy, modern city of Tokyo as you slowly travel further and further north exploring all that Northern Tohoku and Western Hokkaido have to offer. Tohoku is the northern part of Honshu, the main island of the Japanese archipelago. Tohoku is known as a remote and scenic region, and for its numerous traditional onsens, and welcoming and friendly people. You will end up on Japan's northernmost island, Hokkaido. Among the Japanese, Hokkaido has become synonymous with sensational food, stunning scenery and some of the best onsens in Japan.

## Destinations

*Tokyo, Aizu-Wakamatsu, Nyuto Onsen, Kakunodate, Akita, Aomori, Hakodate, Noboribetsu Onsen, Sapporo*

## Tour Factors



Cultural Immersion



Pace



Physical Activity



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## Tour Details

Northern Tokoku and Western Hokkaido are rich in history and traditional Japanese culture. In Aizu-Wakamatsu you will have the opportunity to explore an old Samurai city full of history and tradition. Relax in the hot springs at traditional Nyuto Onsen and travel to the former castle town of Kakunodate. Journey along the coast on the Resort Shirakami before arriving at Hakadote where you will be amazed by its enchanting night view, all before arriving at Noboribetsu Onsen with its world famous hot springs. The tour will end in Sapporo, the largest city on Hokkaido and the host of the 1972 Winter Olympics, or at Tokyo (your choice).

Tour Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Aizu-Wakamatsu's Samurai Traditions</li><li>✓ Remote Nyuto Onsen</li><li>✓ Samurai Homes of Kakunodate</li><li>✓ Train from Akita to Aomori with Tsugaru Shamisen performance</li><li>✓ Three Kaiseki-style dinners</li><li>✓ Three separate rides on a Shinkansen (bullet train)</li></ul>
Tour Inclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Travel Guard Gold Policy (for American tour members only)</li><li>✓ Baggage transfer from city to city</li><li>✓ Reserved seat train tickets between cities</li><li>✓ Electronic version of Tour Handbook and Japanese History</li></ul>
Tour Exclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ International airfare is NOT included.</li><li>✗ A printed itinerary is not included</li><li>✗ Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included</li></ul>

# Map



## Tour Destinations

- 📍 Tokyo
- 📍 Aizu Wakamatsu
- 📍 Nyuto Onsen
- 📍 Kakunodate
- 📍 Akita
- 📍 Aomori
- 📍 Hakodate
- 📍 Noboribetsu Onsen
- 📍 Sapporo or Tokyo

# Itinerary

## **Day 1 Arrive in Tokyo**

You will be staying overnight in the city of Tokyo. You will travel on your own to Tokyo and check into the hotel. We will leave a message for you at the hotel informing you of the meeting time for the next day. No meals included.

**TBD; Walking: TBD**

## **Day 2 Travel to Aizu-Wakamatsu; Aizu-Wakamatsu - Samurai Mansion; Overnight Higashiyama Onsen**

Before leaving Tokyo, you will need to prepare your luggage for transfer to Aizu-Wakamatsu. We will be traveling to Aizu-Wakamatsu with an overnight bag only. Please prepare your overnight bag for 2 days and 1 night. After breakfast you will start the day with a Welcome/Orientation meeting, and then travel to Aizu-Wakamatsu. Aizu Wakamatsu is a former castle town with a long Samurai tradition. After arriving at Aizu Wakamatsu and dropping off our luggage, we will visit the Aizu Bukeyashiki (Samurai Mansion). This was the home of an important Samurai, and therefore is very large with dozens of different rooms and sections including gardens, guest rooms, a tea house, an archery range, and a rice mill. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at the ryokan included.

**Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium**

## **Day 3 Aizu-Wakamatsu - Sazaedo Pagoda, Nisshin Samurai School, Tsuruga Castle**

Today we will further explore the Samurai city of Aizu Wakamatsu. We will start at the Sazaedo Tower. Completed in 1796, the wooden Sazaedo temple isn't huge but what makes it unique is its double helix staircase on which the people going up and the people going down never pass each other. Next, we will tour the Samurai School where the children of the Samurai attended. In the afternoon we will visit Tsuruga Castle, originally built in 1384. Tsuruga Castle was one of the last strongholds of the Boshin War. However, it was destroyed by Samurai still loyal to the Tokugawa Shogunate after the Boshin War of 1868, a rebellion against the newly formed Meiji government. The castle was rebuilt as a concrete reconstruction in the 1960s, and in renovation works completed in 2011 the color of the roof tiles was changed from grey to the original red tiles. The inside of the castle houses a museum with displays depicting the history of the castle and the Samurai lifestyle. After touring the castle, we will return to the ryokan to retrieve your main luggage. Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at the ryokan included.

**Travel: 1 Hour;; Walking: Heavy**

## **Day 4 Travel to Nyuto Onsen; Overnight Nyuto Onsen**

Before leaving Aizu-Wakamatsu, you will need to prepare your luggage to transfer to Akita. We will be traveling to Nyuto Onsen, Kakunodate, and Akita with an overnight bag only. Please prepare your overnight bag for 2 days and 1 night. Today we will travel by train and bus to Nyuto Onsen. Nyuto Onsen is a collection of mostly traditional and rustic onsen ryokan in the mountains of eastern Akita Prefecture. The name Nyuto Onsen means "nipple hot spring" and comes from the suggestive shape of nearby Mount Nyuto rather than the milky/cloudy appearance of the area's hot spring water. Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at the ryokan included.

**Travel: 4 1/2 Hours; Walking: Light**

### **Day 5 Travel to Kakunodate; Kakunodate - Kakunodate Denshokan, Samurai Homes; Travel to Akita**

After breakfast at the ryokan we will travel to Kakunodate. Kakunodate is a former castle town, and while the castle no longer exists, the samurai tradition is still strong. Today, the samurai district has some of the best preserved examples of samurai homes anywhere in Japan. We will tour two homes: the Aoyogi and the Ishiguro. The Aoyogi home is the largest in Kakunodate, and includes multiple buildings with museum collections documenting the samurai traditions and history in Kakunodate. The area open to visitors at the Ishiguro home is limited because the Ishiguro family still maintains a residence in the home. We will finish our time in Kakunodate at the Denshokan Museum. This museum has numerous local arts and handicrafts on display, the most prominent being items made from cherry tree bark. During the cold winter months, the samurai would earn extra income by making these items. We will depart Kakunodate and travel to Akita by train. You will retrieve your main luggage after checking into the hotel. Breakfast at the ryokan and lunch at a local restaurant is included.

**Travel: 1 1/2 Hours; Walking: Medium**

### **Day 6 Travel by train to Aomori with Tsuruga Shamisen Performance; Aomori - Nebuta Warasse Museum; Travel to Hakodate; Hakodate - Hakodate Ropeway**

Before leaving Akita, you will need to prepare your luggage to transfer to Noboribetsu Onsen. We will be traveling to Aomori, Hakodate, and Noboribetsu Onsen with an overnight bag only. Please prepare your overnight bag for 2 days and 1 night. After breakfast we will travel to Aomori by Resort Shirakami. The Resort Shirakami is a sightseeing train along the scenic coastline in northern Japan. Since the train goes through the Tsugaru Peninsula, Tsugaru Shamisen players will board the train for part of the trip. After arriving in Aomori, we will stop at the Nebuta Warasse Museum, dedicated to the city's famous Nebuta Matsuri (Nebuta Festival) held every year in early August. The Nebuta Warasse Museum attempts to capture the spirit of the festival and gives visitors a taste of its lively atmosphere, history, and traditions. From here we will travel to Hakodate. Hakodate was one of the first cities open to the West after the Meiji Restoration. In the evening we will take a cable car to the top of Mt. Hakodate where we will enjoy a panoramic view of Hakodate's night lights. Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at a local restaurant included.

**Travel: 4 1/2 Hours; Walking: Medium**

### **Day 7 Hakodate - Hakodate Morning Market; Travel to Noboribetsu Onsen; Overnight Noboribetsu Onsen**

Early in the morning after breakfast we will visit the Hakodate Morning Market where the sellers can prepare the specialties of Hakodate (crab, sea urchin, and squid) fresh from their stalls for breakfast. We will then travel to Noboribetsu Onsen, one of the most popular and famous hot spring resorts in Japan. After arriving at Noboribetsu Onsen and picking up your main luggage, you will have free time to explore places like the Jigoku-dani (Hell Valley) and the other geothermal activity in the area. You will also have time to relax in one of the many hot springs in Noboribetsu Onsen. Breakfast and dinner at the ryokan are included.

**Travel: 4 Hours; Walking: Medium**

### **Day 8 Sapporo**

After breakfast you will have some free time in Noboribetsu Onsen. You will be sent back to Sapporo or Sapporo's Chitose airport, depending on whether you will continue around Japan on your own, or fly home (or back to Tokyo). If going to the airport you can arrive at the airport at 11am or 12:10pm. If returning to Sapporo you can arrive at 12:00pm. Breakfast at the ryokan included.

**Travel: TBD; Walking: TBD**

Walking level descriptions:

Light - 0 to 2 miles on level ground

Medium - 2 to 4 miles on level ground or 0 to 2 miles on hilly ground

Heavy - 4 to 6 miles on level ground or 2 to 4 miles on hilly ground

## Dates & Pricing

Dates	Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person)	Status
Jul 19, 2020 - Jul 26, 2020	\$2,994.00/ \$405.00	<b>Closed</b>
Oct 18, 2020 - Oct 25, 2020	\$3,244.00/ \$405.00	Available
Jun 13, 2021 - Jun 20, 2021	\$3,224.00/ \$405.00	Available
Jul 18, 2021 - Jul 25, 2021	\$3,224.00/ \$405.00	Available
Aug 22, 2021 - Aug 29, 2021	\$3,224.00/ \$405.00	Available
Sep 19, 2021 - Sep 26, 2021	\$3,224.00/ \$405.00	Available
Oct 17, 2021 - Oct 24, 2021	\$3,494.00/ \$405.00	Available



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## Inclusions

- Local, licensed, English-speaking, Japanese guides
- **Travel insurance from Travel Guard**, one of the world's largest travel insurance providers, will be provided to everyone from the United States. All others will receive a \$100 per person credit and will be responsible for obtaining their own travel insurance in their own home country. (The insurance provided by Samurai Tours will cover the land portion only. Insurance to cover airfare and other additional expenses is the tour member's responsibility.)
  - Exact coverage dependent on state
    - For residents of the following states please click here for your available plan. FL, KS, MN, MO, MT, NY, and WA
    - For all other states and the District of Columbia click here
  - **Travel Insurance Surcharge:** Depending on your age at the time the travel insurance is purchased, you may be subject to the following surcharge for your travel insurance. Travel insurance surcharges will be due at the same time as your tour deposits. (the surcharge itself is not insured)
    - Up to 69 - \$0
    - 70-74 - \$100
    - 75-79 - \$125
    - 80-84 - \$200
    - 85+ - \$300
  - **Travel Insurance Opt-Out:** If you would prefer to opt out of the travel insurance, please note this at the time of registration. You will receive a \$100 credit per person, which will be reflected on your invoice. In the event that you would need to cancel your tour, cancellation penalties may apply. See the Terms and Conditions page for the Cancellation Fees Schedule.
- All transportation from Tokyo to Sapporo as described in the itinerary
- Lodging for 7 nights in Japanese-style ryokans or western-style hotels
- Meals:
  - Breakfast every morning from Day 2 through Day 8 of the itinerary
  - One Japanese-style lunch
  - Five Japanese-style dinners
- All transportation costs when traveling with the group (transportation costs during scheduled free times are the tour member's responsibility)
- Admission fees to the destinations and activities listed in the Tour Highlights column on the right (itinerary specifics subject to change)
- Electronic version of itinerary
- Sayonara dinner at the end of the tour
- Baggage transfer from Tokyo to Aizu-Wakamatsu
- Baggage transfer from Aizu-Wakamatsu to Akita
- Baggage transfer from Akita to Noboribetsu Onsen

Each tour member receives an electronic copy of our tour handbook. This handbook is full of tips and suggestions taken from our Japan travel experiences that allow you to better plan and prepare for your trip, and therefore enjoy your trip even more. The tips and suggestions included cover everything from how to save while exchanging money, what to pack, some basic Japanese-language tips, general etiquette do's-and-don'ts, ryokan customs, etc.

## Exclusions

- Airfare is NOT included.
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included

- Transportation to Tokyo at the beginning of the tour
- Transportation from Sapporo at the end of the tour
- A printed itinerary is not included

Thank you for downloading this PDF version of our tour. Please visit our website at [www.samuraitours.com/tours](http://www.samuraitours.com/tours) for the most current dates, prices and information.

## Contact Samurai Tours

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### MEMBERSHIPS/ASSOCIATIONS

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