

UNIQUE  
**Japan**  
TOURS

Experts in Real Japan Travel



Magical **WINTER**  
in Japan



[Ski & Snowboard Holidays](#) | [Winter Highlights Tour](#) | [Winter Wildlife Tour](#)

# Japan's Top 5 Winter Best Bits

**Winter in Japan** has a special magic to it, one you cannot experience any other time of the year. With far fewer tourists means you can avoid the seasonal crowds and long queues, so often associated with the cherry blossom or Autumn leaf changing seasons. Hot springs and speciality dishes from different regions are best served in the Winter. From December onwards you can see the cities light up with state of the art Christmas illumination. Take a day trip to the ski slopes from Tokyo, chill out in the outdoor onsens found all over Japan, and ride through each place on the high speed bullet trains like a local! Although you will need to bring your Winter coat, day time is usually pleasant with crisp fresh blue skies.

## 1. Ryokan Stays & Onsens

There is nothing more rewarding than an early morning or late evening dip in the natural hot springs at any time of the year, but most magical in the Winter. A soak in the healing mineral waters will make your skin feel like a new born not to mention relax your muscles and ease your stiff shoulders. Combined with a stay in a traditional Japanese ryokan, you have the makings of an unforgettable trip. Fortunately, similar to ski resorts, you are never too far from one.





## 2. World Class Ski Resorts

What we love most about skiing in Japan is that you are never too far from a slope, whether you're in Tokyo or Kyoto, you can be guaranteed easy access to the big resorts. You can expect top quality snow (powder at its best) with facilities and service (many English speaking) that cannot be beaten. Japan's mountains receive the best snow fall in the world while temperatures average at between - 5 to -10 degrees centigrade. Compare this to Europe and US, consider this warm!!

## 3. Seasonal Winter Cuisine

For any food lover out there, Japan is heaven with Winter arguably the best time of year to visit. A trip to the local fish markets, buzzing with activity, is the perfect chance to sample the best seafood and sushi in the world. From oysters in Hiroshima to giant crabs and BBQ lamb in Hokkaido, reading menus in Japan is always a treat. Meet the lively locals at your nearest 'Izakaya' (Japanese style pub). Accompanied with warm 'sake' (rice wine), sample hearty wholesome 'Oden' (slow cooked simmered vegetables, eggs, tofu, boiled in seasoned broth) and 'Nabe' (stew cooked and shared with family and friends at a table) which both come out in force over the winter months in the home or outside.



## 4. Wildlife & Nature

Fourth on our list for Winter highlights is getting out of the cities and resort towns to meet the wild snow monkeys in Nagano or the red crowned cranes in Hokkaido. Although you can access this all year round, it is not until the harsh Winter weather approaches that you will find an abundant amount of monkeys bathing in the outdoor onsen, with snow capped trees and rocks in the background. If you chose Hokkaido as your Winter destination then we highly recommend venturing to the untouched marshes in Eastern Hokkaido, home to the symbolic red crowned cranes. (See Page 8/9, 'Journey to the East' 7 Night Tour).

## 5. Sapporo Snow Festival (Yuki Matsuri)

If you can manage to get to Japan in February then a trip to the Snow Festival located in Sapporo, Hokkaido is a must. Advance booking is essential as this much anticipated event gets booked out months beforehand. Besides enjoying the array of painstakingly sculptured snow creations during the day, the festival stays alive in the evenings with magnificent illumination, concerts, food stalls, ice bars and much more to expect. (See page 8/9 'Journey to the East' featuring Sapporo Snow Festival).





# Ski & See Japan featuring Hakuba

Allow us introduce, what we consider, the best Ski Resorts and areas in Japan.

## Hakuba Valley Ski Resort

If you are looking for an epic alpine Asian adventure, then Hakuba sits right up there with the very best from Europe and North American resorts. A resort for all levels from beginner to advanced, you can choose from a selection of 13 ski resorts, 137 ski lifts, 7 terrain parks, night skiing and an endless choice of hiking trails.

## Getting there and back

Located deep in the Japanese Alps in Nagano Prefecture, you can access this mega mountain playground in less than just two and a half hours from the capital Tokyo using the high speed bullet train and bus. Alternatively, you can go direct from Narita or Haneda Airport to Hakuba by private or shared shuttle service.

Whatever your plan or budget, our team will give you the best advice to make this a seamless journey.



### Departure Months:

Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
Feb	May	Aug	Nov
Mar	Jun	Sep	Dec

## Ski & See Japan featuring HAKUBA

Tokyo Airport or City => Hakuba => Jigokudani & Matsumoto (day trips) => Takayama => Kyoto => Tokyo

## Ski HAKUBA

Tokyo Airport or City Centre => Hakuba Valley => Jigokudani & Matsumoto (day trip) => Tokyo Airport or City Centre

## Add-On Experiences

Hakuba's alpine location is perfect for day trip explorations, if skiing is not for you. Matsumoto castle, Jigokudani Snow Monkeys, and the Kurobe Alpine Route are all within reasonable distances which can be done as a day trip or over one or two nights stay. Our local Hakuba experts will arrange either private or shared day tours for you and your group.

Apres Ski in the Hakuba region is full of surprises, some parts livelier

than others. So depending on who you are traveling with (family or friends), we will help choose the best location for your group.

Combined with high speed bullet train journeys, traditional ryokan stays, 'rotemburo' (outdoor onsen), and seasonal hearty dishes, you can be guaranteed an unforgettable ski/snow board holiday experience.



## HAKUBA VALLEY



## Ski Hakuba Travel Tips

- ★★★★★ Choice of Runs
- ★★★★★ Powder & Parks
- ★★★★★ Family Friendly
- ★★★★★ Access
- ★★★★★ English Facilities
- \$\$\$\$\$ Price

**Recommended Duration:**  
4 - 7 nights.

**Best Season:**  
Late December – Late March.

**Avoid:** Weekends, Holiday Seasons, Chinese New Year (peak prices apply).

**English speaking Instructors:**  
Available but pre-booking advised.

**Ski/Snowboard Rental:**  
Recommended to rent your board/skies, instead of carrying from home country. Pre-booking advised. Bring own wear if you can. Sizes in Japan can differ.

**'Takkyubin' Service:** No need to carry your luggage if travelling on to new town/city in Japan. We will arrange to send them from hotel to hotel!

**Onsen:** Be sure to stay somewhere with Onsen or at least nearby to one.

**Lift Access:** Make sure your accommodation has shuttle service to avoid use of taxi's.

**Day Trip:** Allow at least one day off the mountain to see snow monkeys at Jigokudani.



### Ski Holiday Extensions

If you have a few days to spare, we highly recommend additional nights in Kyoto, Takayama, and Tokyo. Given the proximity to these must see places, it would seem wasteful not to drop in! All you will need is an extra 7 days to allow us make this a Winter holiday of a lifetime.





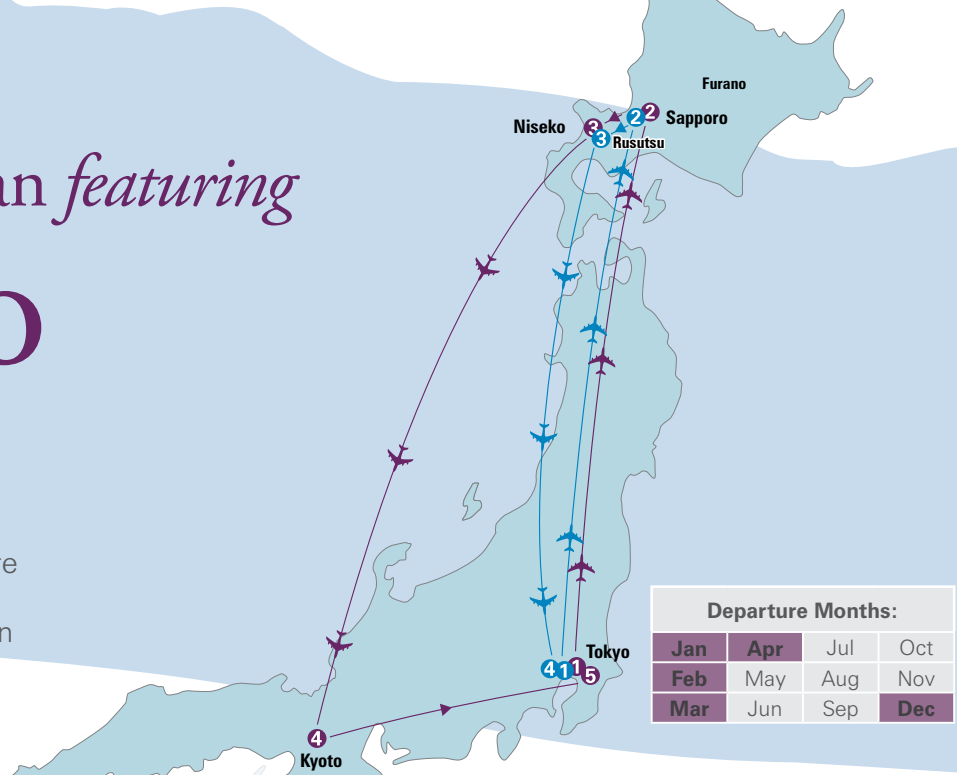
# Ski & See Japan featuring Niseko

**Hokkaido**, located north of Honshu, is perhaps the crème de la crème of ski resorts, although slightly more challenging to get to. This second largest island in Japan spends over half of the year covered in snow. Powerful winds blow in from Russia between November and April bringing powder snow, and plenty of it!

## Niseko

Niseko attracts large numbers from outside of Japan, mainly Australia, New Zealand, other Asian countries and more recently Europe. With such an international mix, you may not get the traditional Japan that some resorts have but you will get great facilities, services, and not forgetting apres ski! Made up of four main areas: Annupuri, Higashiyama, Hanazono, and Hirafu.

Ski runs stretch for 48km in total covering more than 2191 acres of terrain with the longest run a challenging 5.6km. Whether you are a beginner or an avid off-piste adventurer, there is no shortage of lifts and runs to select from.



Departure Months:			
Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
Feb	May	Aug	Nov
Mar	Jun	Sep	Dec

## Ski & See Japan featuring NISEKO

**Tokyo Airport or city** => Sapporo => NISEKO (Furano & Rusutsu Day Trips) => Kyoto => Tokyo

## Ski NISEKO

**Tokyo Airport or city** => Sapporo => NISEKO (Furano & Rusutsu Day Trips) => Tokyo Airport or City Centre

## Getting there and back

Niseko is accessed via Sapporo with direct connections from some Asian hubs (Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, China) as well as domestic connections from Tokyo and Osaka airports. Travel 2 hours by coach from airport to your accommodation.

## Accommodation

Niseko is packed with a variety of accommodation types from self

catering apartments to 5 star resort hotels to traditional minshiku's and ryokans.

No day at a Japanese ski resort is complete without a daily dip in the volcanic hot springs, preferably the outdoor ones (rotenburo). A visit to the 100 year old Kombu Onsen is a must during your stay in Niseko but you will have plenty of opportunities to sample one of the many open to the public as day spas.



## Ski Holiday Extensions

After your weeks Hokkaido holiday, we highly recommend exploring the bigger cities such as Sapporo and Tokyo and if time allows, the ancient capital of Kyoto. Accessibility

for getting around Japan is second to none so if you're worried about travel time to places, stop right there. Shinkansen journeys are an experience not to be missed.



# Ski Niseko Travel Tips

- \*\*\*\*\* Choice of Runs
- \*\*\*\*\* Powder & Parks
- \*\*\*\*\* Family Friendly
- \*\*\*\*\* Access
- \*\*\*\*\* English Facilities
- \$\$\$\$\$ Price

**Recommended Duration:**  
5 - 7 nights.

**Best Season:**  
Early December – Late April.

**Family Holidays:** Rusutsu Resort is the perfect place for family ski holidays.

**Furano Resort:** Buses run to Furano, Rusutsu and Kiroro daily from Niseko which are good alternatives if time allows.

**Avoid:** Weekends, Holiday Seasons, Chinese New Year (peak prices apply).

**English speaking Instructors:** Available but pre-booking advised.

**Ski/Snowboard Rental (gear & wear):** Recommended to hire gear locally. Bring your own wear unless you pre-book your correct size in advance. Sizes in Japan tend to be smaller. Pre-booking advised for both.

**'Takkyubin' Service:** Send luggage, don't carry it! You won't regret it. Hotel to hotel courier service runs throughout Japan and is very reliable.

**Onsen:** Be sure to stay somewhere with Onsen or at least nearby to one.

**Lift Access:** Walking distance to lift is always a bonus but at least, make sure the shuttle bus runs by your accommodation. Taxi fares can add up.

# Journey to the East

*featuring Sapporo Snow Festival*

**Tour Type:** Fully Escorted Winter Tour **7 Nights / 8 Days**

**Journey to the East** is a week long discovery to the truly unknown and hidden parts of Eastern Hokkaido. These vast national parks and lakes are home to the symbolic and majestic red crowned cranes, wild bears, red foxes and giant eagles. Enjoy coastal explorations searching for dolphins, whales and sea lions. Visit lakes set in ancient volcano calderas. Feed white tailed eagles in their natural habitat. Learn about the indigenous Ainu people and relax in open air hot spring baths. These are just some of the encounters you can expect on this incredible journey through Eastern Hokkaido.



Annual Tour Dates						
February:						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29						

## Tour Inclusions

- Airport Transfer on Day 1
- 7 Nights Accommodation
- Tour Leader throughout with local guides in places
- Entrance fees throughout
  - Shiretoko Nature Cruise
  - Shiretoko Aurora Show (subject to performance dates)
  - Ainu Dance Show
  - Abashiri Goal Tour

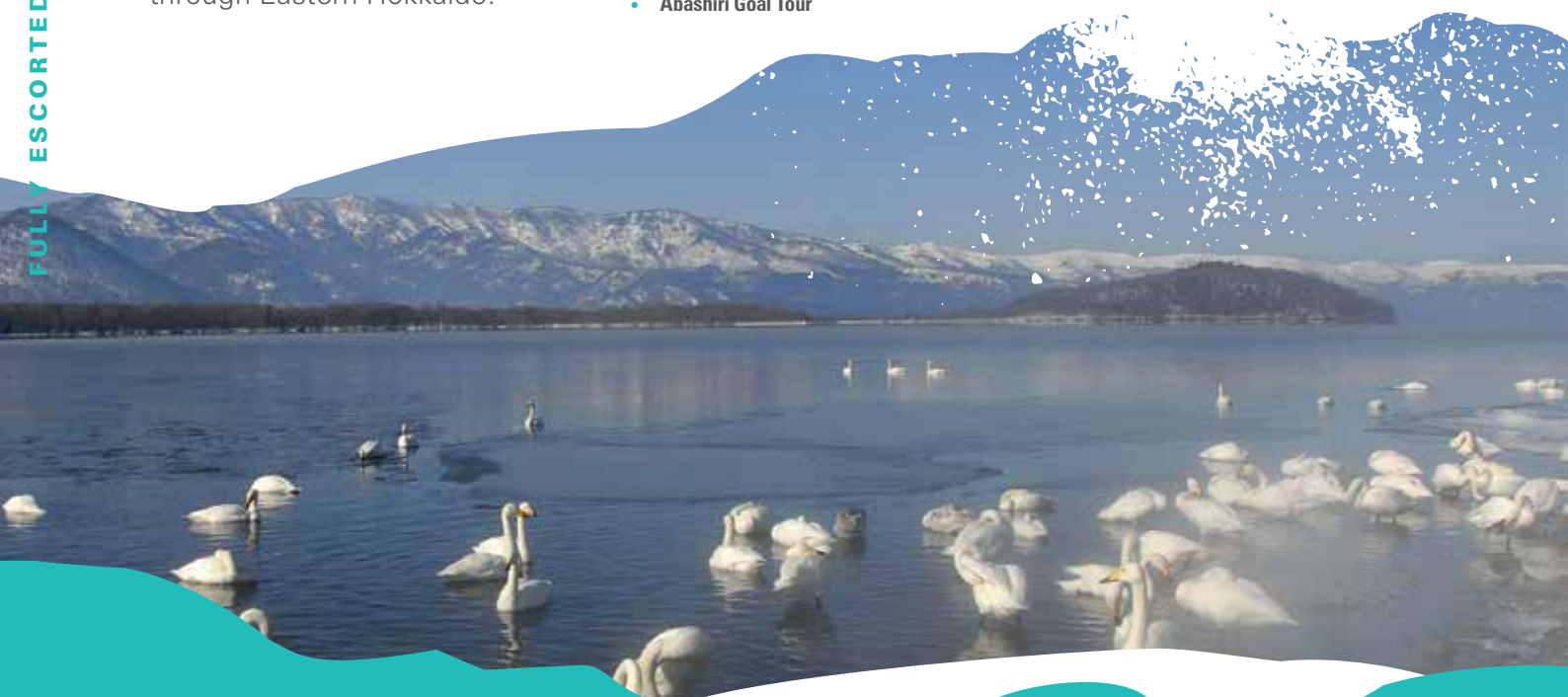
## Journey to the East Route:

Tokyo(1) => Sapporo(2) => Lake Akan(2) => Shiretoko(1) => Abashiri(1) => Tokyo or Osaka

- All transfers including:
  - Internal return flights
  - Private Coaches
- Meals
  - Breakfast daily
  - 5 Evening Meals

Prices and full itinerary can be seen on our website: [www.uniquejapantours.com](http://www.uniquejapantours.com)

FULLY ESCORTED WINTER TOUR







## Sapporo Snow Festival

After one day and night in exciting Tokyo, we will hop on a short flight up to Hokkaido's capital city, Sapporo. Experience one of the largest snow festivals in the world where giant snow sculptures, visited by some two million people every year, line the streets of Sapporo day and night, waiting to wow you with their enormous impact and street festival feeling!

## Lake Akan & The Red Crowned Cranes

Kushiro, also known as "the town of mist," is situated in the south-eastern part of Hokkaido, facing the Pacific Ocean. Akan Tancho is known as the site of the first successful artificial breeding of tancho cranes (Japanese cranes), which are designated as special natural monuments.

The red-crowned crane, or Tancho in Japanese, is an iconic creature and a symbol of good fortune, long life and loyalty. It is one of the largest east Asian cranes and one of the rarest cranes in the world. You can enjoy watching these symbolic birds from the best observation spots on the island.



## Shiretoko Peninsula

Explore one of the most remote regions in all of Japan, eastern Hokkaido's Shiretoko Peninsula. Shiretoko National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to huge variety of wildlife, including brown bears, deer, winter red foxes and eagles. Sightseeing boat cruises are the best way to take in the rugged coastline of the Shiretoko Peninsula. Here you can watch out for dolphins, whales and sea lions.



## Rausu & Abashiri

With a population of just 6,000 souls, Rausu is the largest town in the Shiretoko Peninsula. A trip to this small fishing port will give you a fantastic taste of small town life in Japan. Known worldwide as a bird-watcher's paradise, famous for its eagles and owls, get ready to see the largest eagle in the world, the Stellar's Sea Eagle, as it soars through the air before diving down to catch its natural prey, fish. Nearby Abashiri is a city of 40,000 people, famous for its drift ice, prison museum, and Lake Tofutsu.



Our Small Group Tour will end at airport in Hokkaido. Your flight to either Tokyo or Osaka will be provided to allow you the freedom to continue on your journey through central Japan, taking in our Winter Highlights Extended Tour (page 10/11).

# Winter Highlights

**Extend your Winter Holiday** to Japan by adding any of the following recommended towns and cities to your plan. Your dedicated Japan travel consultant will chose the best route to take, depending on which Winter holiday you decide on. From the list below, we recommend choosing at least two areas to extend your tour to:



## Tour Extension Route:

Kyoto (2 or 3) => Kanazawa (1) => Takayama via Gokayama Day Trip (2) => Matsumoto & Jigokudani (1) => Tokyo (2 or 3)

Kyoto

Recommended Stay: 2-3 nights



Kanazawa & Gokayama

Recommended Stay: 1-2 nights





## Takayama, Matsumoto & Yudanaka Onsen

Recommended Stay: 2-3 nights



## Tokyo & Mt Fuji

Recommended Stay: 2-3 nights



### Next Steps

1. Call Or Email us with the following details:
  - Preferred Travel Dates
  - Number of people
  - Room Types (Single/Double/Twin/Triple/Family)
  - Tell us your preferred places to see and activities to enjoy
  - Travel Style (Escorted, Independent, or a mixture of both)
2. Wait to receive a custom built itinerary and costing from one of our Japan travel experts
3. Make as many changes until you get the perfect plan!
4. Pay small booking deposit (€250 / £200 / \$300 per person)

5. Allow us a few days to confirm all services
6. Settle your final balance by its due date
7. Wait for your travel pack to arrive (usually 2 weeks prior to departure date)
8. Don't miss that flight!!

A full list of terms and conditions can be viewed online:  
[www.uniquejapantours.com/Terms-&Conditions](http://www.uniquejapantours.com/Terms-&Conditions)

**Unique Japan Tours** will help you from the moment you land in Japan until the day you leave. If you encounter problems while in Japan, rest assured, our team of English speaking assistants (located all over Japan) will be ready to help you and your holiday friends and family as much as possible.





A special thanks to the [Japan National Tourist Organisation](#) and [Rusutsu Resort Hotel & Convention](#) for supplying some of the images included in this design production.

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