

Lake Shikaribetsu Snowshoe & Cross-Country Ski



In the Tokachi Shikaoi Geopark, volcanic activity has created a number of small lava domes that have dammed up rivers, and the permafrost and periglacial landforms, including Japan's oldest ice, spread out from beneath the wind pits in the mountains around Lake Shikaribetsu. Through these landforms and ecosystems, as well as the wisdom and industry of living in a cold climate, the "story of life nurtured by volcanoes and frost" is told through the four seasons, and a "fantastic village (kotan) that appears in the middle of winter is born in a space the makes use of frost.

Experience the world of ice by snowshoeing and cross-country skiing around Lake Shikaribetsu.

In this tour, you will first learn about the geographical features around Lake Shikaribetsu and Shikaoi area. Then you will have a chance to go outside and actually feel and experience for yourself the amazing snowscape of the area !

Highlights:

- Snowshoe the virgin forest of Ezo Spruce and Abies sachalinensis unique to Hokkaido.
- Cross-country skiing to Lake Shinonome, one of Hokkaido's three most sacred lakes.
- Experience a hot spring bath (onsen), an ice bar and an overnight stay at Lake Shikaribetsu Kotan, where the ice has completely frozen.
- staying overnight in the Ice Lodge.
- Enjoy meals using local ingredients such as Ezo venishion and dolly varden.

Location:

Lake Shikaribetsu, Hokkaido

Hokkaido Prefecture is the northernmost island and the largest prefecture in Japan, with an area of 83,450 square km(32,220 square mi) and a population of 5.2 million. Hokkaido is known for its natural hot springs (*onsen*), volcanos and ski resorts. With the large area, many of its land are left unspoiled, which allows us to preserve and enjoy its natural beauty. Hokkaido is home to a Natural World Heritage Site, a Ramsar Convention Wetland and several national parks. Each time you visit, you will experience a new side of Hokkaido.

Lake Shikaribetsu

Lake Shikaribetsu is located in central Hokkaido in the Daisetsuzan National Park. Sitting 810 m(2,657 ft) above sea level, it is known as the only Natural Lake in the Daisetsuzan National Park. Primeval forest surrounds the lake of 13km(8mi) in circumference. On the east side of the lake, you will see Mount Tenbouzan – the symbol of Lake Shikaribetsu. The mountain has 2 humps, and combined with its reflection on the lake, it is also known as the “Lip Mountain” as it looks like a person's lip.

Main Activity:	Snowshoe Trekking
Difficulty:	2 Easy Active (approximately 2~4 hours of easy activites per day)
Tour Dates:	01 February, 2023 - 10 March, 2023
Pax:	Minimum 4 Maximum 4
Price:	From JPY 250,000- (per person – tax included)

[Route map](#)

[Day-by-day Itinerary](#)

[What's included](#)

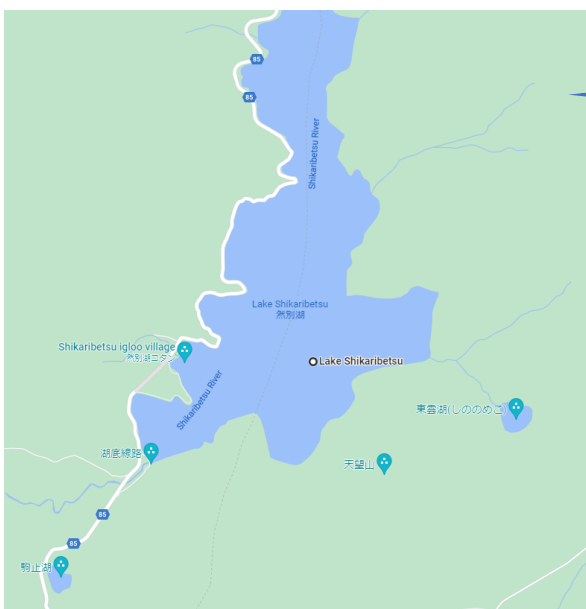
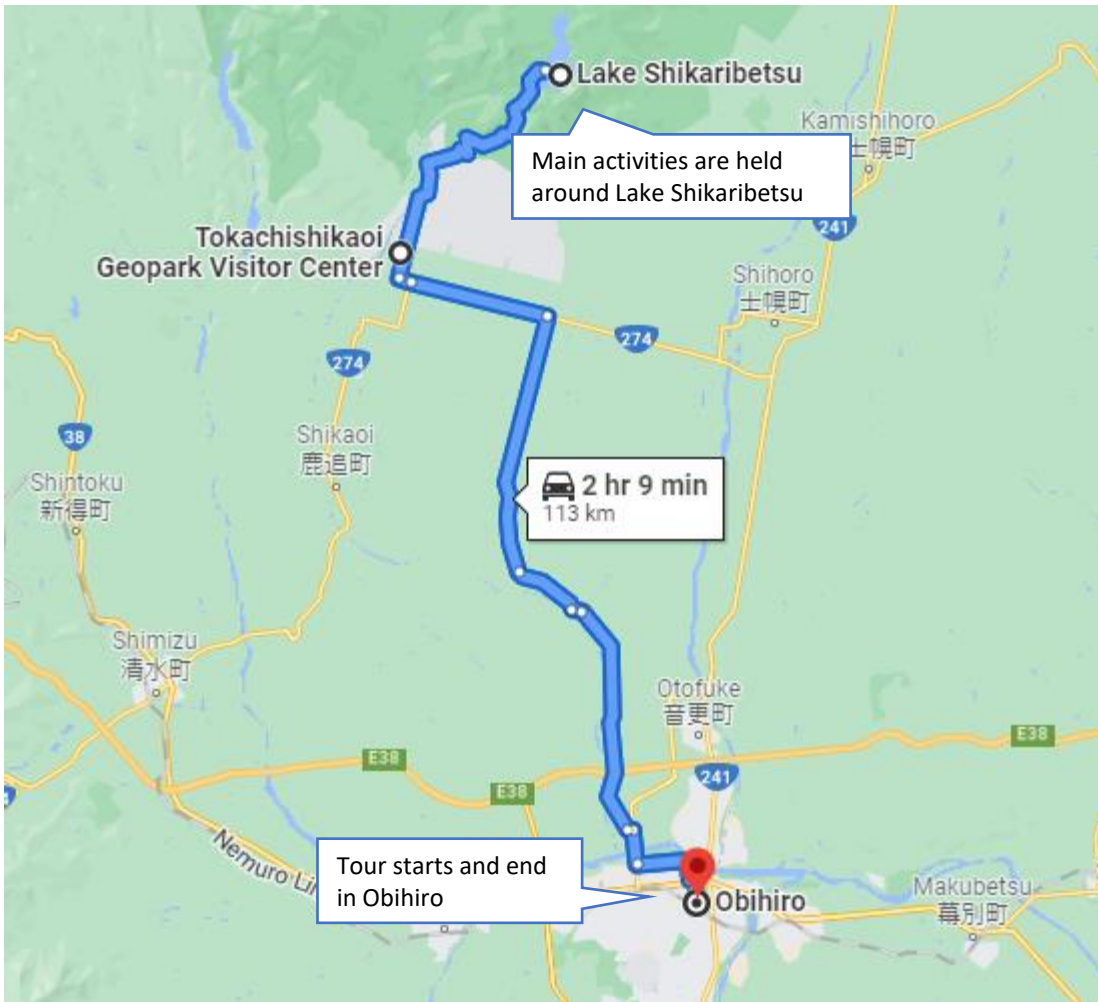
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Route map



Day-by-day Itinerary

Day 1 – Meet at Obihiro Airport

We will meet at a hotel in Obihiro City. Here, before we start our great adventure, we will meet our guide who will give an introduction of the meeting. The guide will go over the itinerary and also give a chance for us to introduce each other.

For dinner, we will have a set menu of Japanese Pork donburi. Donburi means bowl of rice with food on top. So for this meal, we will have cooked pork on top of a rice bowl.

Pork bowl is a famous specialty of the Obihiro area. Its roots goes back to the pioneer period. During the pioneer period, people in the Obihiro area distinguished cows are for milk, horses are for power and pigs are for eating. Since that period, people ate pork so as time went on, pork bowl became an indispensable part of the food culture of Obihiro area.

Day 2 – Learn the history of Shikaoi area / Snowshoe Trekking

After a good breakfast at the hotel, we will meet at the hotel lobby and head on to Shikaoi region on a chartered coach. Bus ride will be about an hour and a half. On the bus, we will learn about the Shikaoi region from the guide.

Our first stop of the day is the Shikaoi Geopark Visitor Center. An expert staff will meet us here and will guide us through the building and explain to us about the Shikaoi area. We will learn how the land of Lake Shikaribetsu, Tokachi region and Shikaoi area were formed and also the living habitat of those areas. Even within the Hokkaido prefecture, these areas have a very cold climate, creating a unique topography and an ecosystem that can be called a “glacial museum”. By learning about the origins and the characteristics of Lake Shikaribetsu here and the going outdoors to actually feel the nature for yourself, we will have a chance to enjoy our trip from a different perspective.



Lunch

A western / Japanese mixture buffet lunch will be waiting for us at a restaurant. Plates are cooked by using local ingredients. The chef will give an explanation of the ingredients used and we are also able to ask any questions we have.

Menu sample: omelet made from eggs of Shikaoi Town / Fried Pork Cutlet using Pork from Tokachi region / French Fries from potatoes of Shikaoi / Soft Serve Ice Cream using milk from farms in Shikaoi

Our afternoon activity will start with putting on some snow shoes and trek in the woods. We will observe the unique qualities of snow in this cold region, the traces of winter animals and the plants that endure the cold. The woods around Lake Shikaribetsu is surrounded by virgin forest, and we will also observe valuable wildlife such as white-tailed eagles and Blakiston's fish owls. We have a chance to actually see and experience for ourselves what we learned in the Geopark in the morning.

After we have a good 2 hour trek in the woods, we will have tea time to enjoy some drinks in the Ice Bar. Drinks are served in cups made from pure water of Lake Shikaribetsu. The staff from Lake Shikaribetsu Nature Center builds the Ice Bar and an outdoor ice bath every year for visitors to enjoy. While we grab a drink, we will enjoy talking to these staff and listen to their experiences of building these Ice Bars.

The last but not least experience of this day is enjoying a dip in the outdoor ice bath. The ice bath is located in the best position to enjoy the beautiful scenery of Lake Shikaribetsu. Don't forget to bring your own bathing suit and a towel !

Dinner

For dinner this night, we will have a Shabu Shabu set menu of whey pork. Whey pork is pigs raised on whey produced during cheese making process.

Sample Menu :

- Tokachi Wine
- Sashimi (rainbow trout, scallops, prawns, chrysanthemum)
- Steamed egg custard
- Stewed Pork Belly
- Grilled flounder with saikyo miso sauce
- Shabu shabu of whey pork (shabu shabu is a Japanese style hot pot)
- Tempura (shrimp and vegetables)

After dinner, weather permitting, we will go outside for a night watching activity. With the guide, we will walk for one hour on Lake Shikaribetsu. Just a short walk outside the hotel, we will see the world at night with no artificial lights. The air is more clear in the winter compared to summer, and there are more bright stars in the sky. We can observe the Winter Triangle of Orion, Canis Major, Canis Minor and the Big Dipper.

Activity: Snowshoe Trekking

Difficulty: 2 / 5

Day 3 – Cross-country Ski / Kotan Tour / Ice Lodge

Breakfast

Enjoy plates of Japanese and Western dish for breakfast. Breakfast will be at the restaurant on the ground level where you can enjoy the beautiful scenery of Lake Shikaribetsu.

The morning adventure is cross-country skiing on Lake Shikaribetsu and head to one of the sacred lake – Lake Shinonome. Lake Shinonome is a small lake with a circumference of 1km. Known as one of the three secret lakes in Hokkaido, it is located deep in the virgin forest on the east side of Lake Shikaribetsu, accessible only by foot. It has a majestic atmosphere that has been preserved since the ancient times. Cross-country skiing is a great way to enjoy the changing scenery, the natural formations on the lake, the endless snowfields and the open sky. This activity is a good 3 hour skiing.

Lunch

Once we come back from the adventure, we will enjoy lunch at a café in the Shikaribetsu Nature Center. Flour made in Hokkaido will be used in the plates. Sample Menu: Pancake using Tokachi brand Flour “Sarasa” / French Toast bagel using Tokachi brand Flour “Haru no Kaori no Aoi Sora”

In the afternoon, with the staff from Nature Center, we go on a Kotan Guided Tour, exclusively offered to our group. In the winter, the temperature of the area is about 5~10 degrees below zero during the day, and drops to 15~20 degrees below zero at night. On some days, it even drops 30 degrees below zero, making this area an extremely cold place. To make the most out of this cold weather, snow and ice, the staff at the Nature Center started the Lake Shikaribetsu Kotan project. In this tour, the staff will introduce the history of the Kotan and the secret story behind the construction of the igloo and how this project connects the nature and people.



Dinner

Dinner is served at the hotel.

Sample Menu: Ezo Venison and Doll Varden Set Menu

- Smoked chicken carpaccio
- Egg tofu
- Ezo venison roast
- Salted and grilled Dolly Varden

Tonight, we will be staying overnight in the Ice Lodge. This is the only place where we can stay in an igloo made on a frozen lake. We sleep in a sleeping bag located on top of snow and ice like a bed. Even though the temperature outside the igloo drops to -30 degrees Celsius, inside the igloo is nice and warm because there are no wind blowing in.

Once we are in the sleeping bag, we will be warm and cozy for a good night sleep. This is one unique experience to spend the night on a quiet lake, listening to the creaking of the ice and feeling the changing light through the igloo.

Activity: Cross-country Ski / Kotan Tour / Ice Lodge

Difficulty: 2 / 5



Day 4 – Morning Walk

Rise and Shine ! Before we enjoy our breakfast at the hotel, we will take a morning walk around Lake Shikaribetsu. Meeting the guide at 6am outside the igloo, we walk around the area and look for traces of winter animals which were active at night. Walking early in the morning also allows us to see the fantastic tree ice and diamond dust.

Breakfast

After our good one our morning walk, we will enjoy our last breakfast at the hotel. This is the last chance to enjoy the tasty menus using the local ingredients!

After breakfast, we check out and get on the chartered bus to head on to Obihiro Station. This bus ride is about an hour and a half. While on the bus, we will go over our experiences throughout this tour and share our comments with each other. Once we arrive at the station, we say our farewells to our guide and head back home.

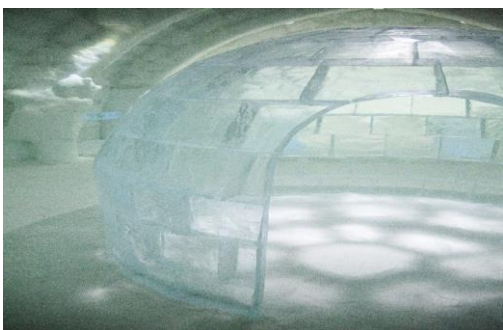
Activity: Morning walk around Lake Shikaribetsu

Difficulty: 1 / 5

Accommodation :

Day1-3

: Lake Shikaribetsu Hot Spring Hotel Fusui / single occupancy



What's included

- All of transportation as stated in the itinerary
- English speaking representative(s) and guide(s)
- Snow-shoe Trekking (snow shoe, boots)
- Cross-country ski (ski shoes, skis, poles)
- 3 night accommodation, single occupancy, those provided within the tour
- 3 Breakfasts, 2 Lunches, 3 Dinners

What's not included

- Cost to/from Obihiro Station before and after the tour
- Personal expense
- Any extra cost for drinks other than

We provide & What to bring

We provide

- Snow-shoe Trekking (snow shoe, boots)
- Drinking water
- First Aid Kit
- Rain gears (ponchos or jackets)
- Cross-country ski (ski shoes, skis, poles)

What to bring

Necessities

- Several sets of comfortable clothing
- Warm clothing
- Winter shoes (water proof is better)
- Waterproof jacket (ski wear is best)
- Rain Gear (umbrellas, raincoats)
- Gloves, hats, goggles
- Swimwear / bathing suits
- Reusable water bottles
- Any personal medications
- Passport (you may need to present it at the time of check-in)
- Travel Insurance
- Cash (in Yen) as many of the stores only accept cash
- Cameras (water proof is better)
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen / lotion
- List of any Medical history

About us



Nippon Travel Agency Hokkaido

We, Nippon Travel Agency Hokkaido (NTA Hokkaido) launched business in 1994, spinning off from “Nippon Travel Agency (NTA)”, the first travel agency in Japan founded in 1905. This spin-off helped us become a specialist in all types of travel in Hokkaido, the largest prefecture of Japan, ranging from Destination Management, Outgoing Tourism, MICE Solutions to Special Interest Tours. We extended our business from the Sapporo office to 8 branch offices within Hokkaido, from Hakodate of southern Hokkaido to Kushiro of eastern Hokkaido. From our 115+ years of experience in the travel market, we are committed to offering travel services of the highest quality, combining our energy and enthusiasm. Our greatest satisfaction comes in serving large numbers of satisfied clients who have experienced the joys and inspiration of travel. If you have any questions or concerns about a trip to Japan, please feel free to contact us. Our mission is to provide the best experience on your next exciting trip to Japan !

Arcs Travel / Masahiko Sakamoto

As the director of the travel division in Arcs Travel, a local travel agency, Masahiko Sakamoto has been working in the travel industry for over 40 years. Starting his career as a salesperson in a hotel, he was soon fascinated by the nature of Hokkaido and founded *Shikaribetsu Nature Center* and became the pioneer of Adventure Travel in Japan. His nature center was the first ever nature center to be founded in Asia. Over the years of his works, he and his nature center were recognized as an excellent land operator by the government and was awarded the Prime Minister’s Award in 2007. Not only do they operate tours, they also work as a member of conservation management counsel for natural recreation of the forest around Lake Shikaribetsu.

Guides

The guides on this tour are professional guides living in the Shikaribetsu Nature Center located in front of Lake Shikaribetsu. Lake Shikaribetsu is not just a lake, but a lake located in a national park meaning it is owned and protected by the government. But based on their long history of working in Lake Shikaribetsu, the Nature Center was given permission to investigate and preserve the lake and its surrounding. So even in an off season for tourists, the staff are busy working on the investigation to make sure the lake and its surroundings are preserved. The guides on this tour are the top two staff members in this Nature Center (both working there for about 30 years) so we are quite confident to say that you will enjoy your time on this tour for sure.

Information and Requirements

Dietary Restrictions

Should you have any dietary restrictions or any special requests, please let us know at the time of booking, in the Registration Form. We will work our best to match your request, but there may be time where we have to ask for your forgiveness if we cannot fulfill a request. In our years of working with overseas groups, we have been requested for Halal, gluten free and MSG free. We ask that you let us know especially for these three restrictions, as many of Japanese dish uses gluten and MSG. Halal is not penetrated much yet in Japan, especially in the countryside.

Our most desire is for you to experience Japan to the fullest, not just through activities and communicating with the locals but through food as well. As we stated above, in certain areas, especially in the countryside of Japan, it may be difficult to completely match your request. So, we would like to ask for you to try your best in challenging the local specialties. On the other hand, we strongly understand that dietary restrictions are very important and we so will try our best to meet your request. But we may need some time to arrange the meal for you so please let us know at the earliest.

Emergency Response Plan

We believe that in order to enjoy any kind of tour, we must first think of safety as the top priority. We, Nippon Travel Agency Hokkaido, ask for all activity guides to be certified with the Advanced First Aid Course or any certificate of similar course (for example wilderness first aid). Other than just being certified, the guides will have a first aid kit along with them during the tour. We will also have a staff in our office to take care of any kind of trouble that may happen during the tour.

Depending on the weather conditions of that day, the guide will be giving out specific instructions to prevent any danger that may occur because of the weather condition. If the weather is unsuitable to fulfil an activity, the guide will make a decision to change the routing. In the worst case scenario, we will substitute the activity with a different activity just as enjoyable as the original activity.

Reservation & Cancellation Policy

Reservation and Payment Methods

After receiving your reservation request, we will send you an email with the necessary reservation forms. Please fill in the forms and send it back to us by email. Personal questions regarding dietary restrictions, height, weight etc. are solely used to provide you with the best service, activities, and meals.

We accept payment by wire or credit card. If you wish to pay by Credit Card, please be noted that we only accept VISA or Master. Any other type of credit card company, we are afraid we can not accept them. If you wish to pay through our bank, please let us know on the reservation form, and we will send you our banking information.

We will require a deposit of JPY 50,000- or Full Payment at the time of completing your reservation form. Your deposit will be applied to the total tour fare of this tour. Final payments must be made 21 days prior your tour date. We will send you a reminder email regarding payment approximately 30 days before your tour starts.

If you wish to cancel your reservation, please let us know by email with a writing that you are cancelling the tour. Please see below for our Cancellation Charge.

Cancellation Notice is Received on:	Cancellation Charge
31 days or Before prior tour start date in Japan	No Charge
30 to 15 days prior to group arrival date in Japan	20% of total tour fare
14 to 8 day prior to tour start date in Japan	50% of total tour fare
7 to 5 day prior to tour start date in Japan	70% of total tour fare
4 day to 1 day prior to tour start date in Japan	100% of total tour fare
No show or on and after tour start date in Japan	100% of total tour fare

Disclaimer

Our tour programs are programmed under the careful consideration of your safety. The guides will pay sufficient attention to keep you away from accidents and/or injuries during the tour. However, we could not assume any responsibilities of the following incidents :

1. Accidents and/or injuries caused from bad physical conditions and/or any diseases or sickness which you already have suffered prior to the tour.
2. Accidents and/or injuries caused by your negligence to safety instructions given by your guides throughout the tour.
3. Any other accidents and/or injuries caused by your self-infliction.

At the time of filling in the Reservation Form, we will ask for you to make a signature on the disclaimer form sent with the reservation form.

Partner Company

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