



Best of Hokkaido 2011

Daily Itinerary

Explore rural Hokkaido, the home of Japan's finest onsen (natural hot springs) and seafood cuisine. A 14 Day - 13 Night scenic cycle tour with an option to extend 2 nights post-tour accommodation and a day cycle tour in historic Kyoto.

Day 1 Meeting in Abashiri

We meet about 6pm at our hotel in Abashiri near the station. After a tour briefing & introduction we stroll the city of Abashiri and have a welcome dinner in town. Abashiri is the largest city in the east coast of Hokkaido and is famous for the winter attraction *ryuhyo*, the huge ice that has drifted down from Amur River. Okhotsk Ryuhyo Museum, Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples, and Abashiri Prison Museum are the popular sights in Abashiri, all accessible by bus. **Accommodation: Hotel/Ensuite (D)**

Day 2 Abashiri to Noto Misaki loop ride

After bike fitting and safety briefing we head out to Noto Misaki. Leaving the town we soon hit the Okhotsk Sea and ride along the coastline, passing by a few temples and fishing village. A short gradual hill towards the cape is a good preparation for tomorrow's ride. The Noto Misaki lookout sees the ocean panorama, and thereafter awaits a pleasant downhill towards Lake Noto. We cycle the lakeside road around Lake Noto, which then links onto the cycling path to Abashiri. Tonight we go out to our favourite restaurant and try out *okonomiyaki* (savory pancake) prepared & cooked right in front of your eyes! **Accommodation: Hotel/Ensuite (B)**
Cycling distance - 50km/31miles Altitude gain - 100m/330ft

Day 3 Abashiri to Lake Kussharo-ko

From Abashiri we head south to a beautiful caldera, Lake Kussharo-Ko via Bihoro Pass, which looks over the lake and surrounding mountains. At the top of the pass we have lunch at the rest house and then enjoy riding the downhills to the shore of Lake Kussharo-Ko. It is the second largest lake in Hokkaido, one of the three lakes in the Akan National Park. The area is known for its abundant hot springs due to the volcanic activities. We have a brief stop at *sunayu*, a popular foot spa site on the shores of Lake Kussharo-Ko. Tonight's accommodation is located on the lakeside of Kussharo-Ko.

Accommodation: Minshuku/Share Bathroom/Onsen (B,D)
Cycling distance - 75km/46miles Altitude gain - 500m/1640ft

Day 4 Lake Kussharo-ko to Nakashibetsu

Today we continue cycling along Lake Kussharo-Ko, which takes us to an active volcano *lozan* "Sulphur Mountain". It erupted about 600 years ago, but is still steaming and reeking of sulphur! After a gradual but long uphill, we reach the lookout of Lake Mashu-Ko, known to have the highest level of clarity in the world. The high cliffs surrounding Mashu-Ko prevents people from going down to the lakeshore, which is believed to help protect the water quality up to present. Most of the time the lake is covered with mist, but if we are lucky we will be able to view the emerald-coloured lake surface. The rest of cycling section is easy, downhill and flat into the farming area of Nakashibetsu.

Accommodation: Minshuku/Share Bathroom/Onsen (B, D)
Cycling distance - 75km/46mile Altitude gain - 700m/2300ft



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Day 5 Nakashibetsu to Rausu

This morning we ride through farmlands, enjoying the changing scenery as we approach Shiretoko Peninsula, known as the last unexplored region of Japan. We cycle along the east coast of the Peninsula, heading to our today's destination, a small fishery village called Rausu. Famous for its sea kelp production, it's here that you can also enjoy fresh seafood and king crab. This afternoon, you have an option to ride or drive further 20km on coast to a secluded onsen Aidomari, offering a perfect seaside setting.

Accommodation: Ryokan/Ensuite (B, D)

Cycling distance - 65-105km / 40-65mile Altitude gain - 200m/660ft

Day 6 Rausu to Utoro

From Rausu, we cycle the Shiretoko Crossroad to the other side of the Peninsula. It is approx. 16km to the top, gradual & long but a scenic ride with a spectacular view of Mt Rausu, the highest peak in the Shiretoko Mountains Range. After a leisurely downhill and lunch at the Shiretoko Nature Centre we make a side trip to Iwaobetsu Onsen, natural rock pools surrounded by trees. By the mid afternoon we head off to our accommodation in Utoro, the gateway to explore the Shiretoko National Park.

Accommodation: Ryokan/Ensuite/Onsen (B, D)

Cycling distance - 65km/40mile Altitude gain - 1000m/3280ft

Day 7 Utoro to Abashiri

We continue riding along the coast and enter into farmlands again. The long straight roads travel through potato farms, which will be in full bloom in early July. We have a brief stop at Koshimizu Gensei-Kaen (Koshimizu Wild Flower Reserve), where about 40 kinds of flowers bloom in spring and summer. We finish our ride back in Abashiri, at a different accommodation near the Lake Abashiri this time, where awaits you with outdoor onsen with a spectacular view of Lake Abashiri.

Accommodation: Ryokan/Ensuite/Onsen (B, D)

Cycling distance - 90km/56mile Altitude gain - 200m/660ft

Day 8 Free day in Abashiri

Today is a rest day in Abashiri. Relax at our quiet lakeside accommodation with nice onsen on site, or explore Abashiri at your leisure. There are a visitor centre, shopping and museums within easy cycling distance of our accommodation.

Accommodation: Ryokan/Ensuite/Onsen (B, D)

Cycling distance - 0km

Day 9 Abashiri to Lake Saroma

From Abashiri we ride on the cycling path, which takes us to Lake Noto and then onto Lake Saroma. Cycling on the path built on the sands spit between the lake and the Okhotsk Sea, we pass by scallop farms and fishing boats, and finally reach our lunch spot at Wakka flower reserve. After lunch we continue cycling around the Lake Saroma, the biggest lake in Hokkaido. A detour to Kimuanepu Misaki is a delightful riding in the forest.

Accommodation: Hotel/Ensuite/Onsen (B,D)

Cycling distance - 70km/43.5mile Altitude gain - 200m/656ft



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Day 10 Lake Saroma to Hamatonbetsu

This morning we will drive to miss cycling the busy traffic section from Lake Saroma to Oumu (approx 2hr drive). Along the way we pass interesting fishery towns, one of which is Monbetsu famous for its massive drift ice in winter. The rich nutrient that the drift ice carries makes this area productive for its fishery, especially the crabs. Once we reach Oumu we get back on our bikes continuing our journey north all along the coastline to Hamatonbetsu. Tonight we are staying at a “cycling terminal”, a type of accommodation established to cater to cyclists, equipped with rental bike facility and onsen to restore tired bodies. **Accommodation: Cycling terminal/Ensuite/Onsen (B,D)**

Cycling distance - 80km/50mile Altitude gain - 400m/1312ft

Day 11 Hamatonbetsu to Wakkanai

On leaving Hamatonbetsu, we cycle by Lake Kutcharo, home to thousands of swans making their winter migration from northern Siberia. Lake Kutcharo is registered by the Ramsar Wetlands Convention as the area is an important staging ground for migratory waterfowl. We continue travelling north along the coast to Wakkanai today, aiming for Japan’s northernmost tip, Cape Soya. On a clear day you can see the outline of Sakhalin Island of Russia only 43kms away. **Accommodation: Hotel/Ensuite/Onsen (B)**

Cycling distance - 95km/59mile Altitude gain - 400m/1312ft

Day 12 Wakkanai - ferry - Rishiri Island

This morning we take a 1.5 hour ferry to the Rishiri Island. Rishiri Island is Japan’s cycling paradise with a circumference of 60km. The coast line is all rideable with ocean views on one side and mountain views on the other. There is a 25km section of cycling road through some flower reserves, which will be in full bloom in June. There are no major hills, little traffic and superb views all day along. Mount Rishiri, also known as Rishiri Fuji, is situated in the centre of the island and is always in your sight. We will take our van on the ferry with us so the support will be there if the island breeze picks up.

Accommodation: Ryokan/Ensuite (B, D)

Cycling distance - 60km/37mile Altitude gain - 300m/984ft

Day 13 Rishiri Island - ferry - Rebun Island - ferry - Wakkanai

A forty mins ferry voyage takes us to neighbouring Rebun island. Unlike Rishiri, Rebun is a non-volcanic island that is long and narrow. The west coast is rugged and predominantly cliffs, whereas the east coast slopes more gently to the sea. Rebun Island, famous as a floral island, has a number of walking and hiking trails, offering opportunities to see rare alpine flowers growing naturally. Today we have a couple of options to cycle or hike this wonderful island Rebun, depending on the weather and everyone’s energy on the day. In the late afternoon we will board the ferry that takes us back to Wakkanai.

Accommodation: Hotel/Ensuite/Onsen (B,D)

Cycling distance: up to 20km/12.5mile or 2-3 hour hiking

Day 14 Wakkanai finish

The tour finishes today after breakfast in Wakkanai. **(B)**

Cycling distance - 0km

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner



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Included in trip cost

- 13 breakfasts and 11 evening meals
- 13 nights accommodation on a twin share basis
- All water and snack food whilst cycling
- English speaking guide & mechanic
- Support vehicle(s)
- Rental bikes
- Helmets by request only
- Bike tools and spare parts
- All ferry transport as described in the itinerary

Not included

- Airfare
- 14 lunches and 2 evening meals
- Personal expenses
- Drinks with included meals
- Optional activities on free day in Abashiri
- Gratitude

Kyoto Extension Tour

We offer an option to extend your trip to Kyoto, the former capital of Japan, where there remain many temples and shrines. If you are taking this option we suggest you arrange your flights from Wakkanai Airport (WKJ) to Osaka Kansai Airport (KIX) on **Day 14**. For detailed instruction on how to get from Kansai to Kyoto please read the tour info document. Your Kyoto guide will meet you at the hotel on the next morning.

The cost of Kyoto extension is **NZ\$970** per person, which includes

- 2 nights accommodation at Hotel Unizo (on twin/double share basis)
- Lunch
- A full day guided cycle tour
- Rental bike

Day 15 Optional Kyoto extension

Japan's former capital, Kyoto, is still a major centre for religion, culture, and...cycling! Kyoto's riverside cycling paths, back alleys lined with traditional houses and shops, and peaceful hillside temples make it the perfect destination to explore by bicycle. This guided extension tour takes you from bustling central Kyoto across town to a dedicated cycling path along the Katsura river. Cycle past community gardens and baseball fields to the outlying district of Arashiyama, famous for its bamboo forests and the wooden bridge of Togetsukyo. From there, continue on past the shores of Ozawa pond to seek enlightenment at the centuries-old rock garden in the Zen temple of Ryoanji. Pedal on to marvel at Kinkakuji Temple, also known as the Golden Pavilion, then coast back into town by way of the Kamo river, stopping on the way for a foot bath and cup of green tea.

Accommodation: Hotel/Ensuite (B, L)

Cycling distances - 50km

Day 16 Extension finishes in Kyoto

The extension tour finishes after breakfast today. You may wish to go souvenir shopping or explore the town further on your own in Kyoto before you leave the country. Seek more information from your Kyoto guide for details about crafts centre, bike shops etc. We



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suggest you take a bus from Kyoto Station to Osaka Kansai airport as the easiest travel mode. (B)