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## Taste of Hokkaido

July 9 - 20, 2016

Please contact us for the price.

### Tour Price includes:

- Tour Escort
- Airfare from Honolulu to Sapporo Roundtrip
- Hotel Accommodations
- Ground Transportation as indicated in the itinerary
- Daily breakfast, four lunches, and six dinners
- Admission to all sites, attractions, and tours as indicated in the itinerary

**July 9, 2016**                      **Day 1**                                      **Saturday**                                      **Honolulu to Chitose**

An afternoon flight takes us from Honolulu to Hokkaido.

**July 10, 2016**                      **Day 2**                                      **Sunday**                                      **Chitose**

We arrive at Chitose Airport in the evening. Upon arrival we will pass through immigrations and then collect our luggage to clear customs. From there we will go to our hotel for the night.

**July 11, 2016**                      **Day 3**                                      **Monday**                                      **Chitose to Asahikawa**

Today we will head north to Hokkaido's second largest city, Asahikawa. Along the way we will visit **Tomita Farms in Furano**. This farm is noted for starting the lavender craze, growing beautiful lavender fields and making a myriad of lavender products from lavender ice cream to award winning perfume. The farm also grows roses, poppies, and yubari melon.

For lunch we will try a local specialty, **gatatan**. This dish was a favorite of the local mining community and combines a staggering amount of ingredients.

As we continue on we will also stop at the **Trick Art Museum**, which specializes in paintings that create the illusion of three dimensions. The paintings range in size from three feet to thirty feet.

Dinner tonight will be at a **tonkatsu** specialty shop.

**July 12, 2016**                      **Day 4**                                      **Tuesday**                                      **Asahikawa**

In the morning we will go to nearby Kamikawa to visit the **Ice Pavilion**. This facility is kept at a cool - 4 degrees Fahrenheit. Here we can experience the cold Hokkaido winter. The highlight of the facility is a room that is kept at - 42 degrees Fahrenheit, the coldest recorded temperature in Japan.

For lunch, we will try one of Hokkaido's specialties, **Jingisukan**, a grilled lamb dish. Named after Genghis Khan because lamb was believed to be the choice meat of Mongolians.

Then it is off to the **Asahiyama Zoo**. After a massive renovation in the 90's, people from all over the country flocked to see the animals in their new habitats. The habitats were redesigned to better spotlight the animals in a more natural habitat while still allowing visitors to get up close.

To finish the day we will visit the **Kawamura Kaneto Ainu Museum**, highlighting the culture of Hokkaido's indigenous people. They also offer various Ainu handcrafts for sale. This is the least commercialized of the three Ainu museums in Hokkaido

For dinner, we will try **Asahikawa Ramen**, which uses a shoyu based broth.

**July 13, 2016**                      **Day 5**                                      **Wednesday**                                      **Asahikawa to Soya**

We hop on a train to journey northward to Japan's northernmost city, **Wakkanai**. Upon our arrival we will enjoy some time strolling through the small **downtown** area near the station. We will then go to the nearby **pier** to see some of the local products produced in the area, including fresh seafood. Next we head to **Wakkanai Park** where we will see a number of memorials, as well as a beautiful view of the surrounding area. Among the monuments are one honoring **Jiro and Taro**, two sled dog brothers who survived a year in Antarctica on their own. Our last stop will be at the **memorial to the Korean Air jetliner** that was shot down by a Russian MIG in 1983.

We will then check in to our hotel before walking to a nearby monument marking the **northernmost point of Japan**. There is also a marker honoring **Mamiya Rinzo**, the Japanese explorer who finished mapping Hokkaido and the Sakhalin islands. Near the monument we can see **ryuhyo** or drift ice which are created during Hokkaido's winter when Soya's waters freeze.

Tonight's dinner will be **Iroribatayaki**. It features a pit in the floor around which you sit and your food is cooked over charcoals in the pit. Their specialties include fresh King Crab, scallops, and local fish.

**July 14, 2016**                      **Day 6**                                      **Thursday**                                      **Soya to Otaru**

After a quiet evening, we will head to Wakkanai Station to catch a train back south. On the way to the station, weather permitting, we may have a chance to see **konbu harvesting**. Hokkaido's konbu is considered the best in Japan with a majority going to Okinawa.

We will stop at Sapporo Station to have to lunch before catching our next train to Otaru. For lunch, you will have a chance to try **curry soup**. Instead of the traditional thick Japanese curry, the ingredients have not been cooked down and are eaten as chunks with a curry broth. Once we arrive at **Otaru**, we will head to the hotel for the evening. The hotel is part of one of Hokkaido's first outlet malls.

**July 15, 2016**

**Day 7**

**Friday**

**Otaru to Niseko**

Today we will head to Niseko. Before we leave Otaru, we will visit the Sakaimichi district, where we will visit an antique music box museum and a glass factory. **The antique music box museum** showcases music boxes from the 19th century ranging in size from a small wardrobe to a full size organ. Nearby is a store where you can make your own music box, selecting the music ranging from Japanese music to classical pieces to Disney songs and then decorating the box itself. At **Kitaichi Glass** you can find glass ware such as light weight mugs with color changing designs to dripless shoyu bottles. The area also sells freshly made senbei, high end chocolates, and antiques.

For lunch, we will go to the **Otaru Pier** to eat at a restaurant that specializes in catch of the day.

Our last stop will be in Yoichi to visit **Nikka Whiskey**. Founded in 1934, it has produced award winning whiskey. A 2014 Fall NHK drama is based on the love story between the Japanese founder and his Scottish wife.

**July 16, 2016**

**Day 8**

**Saturday**

**Niseko**

In the morning, we will have a chance to take a **cooking class** making a German confection, **baumkuchen**. This is a popular dessert in Japan and can be found throughout Japan. This class will teach how to cook it using an outdoor grill.

The afternoon is free to do as you wish. For those who are interested in the outdoors, you can go rafting (on own). Or you can also go into the town do a little shopping (on own). And for those who just want to relax, you can enjoy the onsen at the hotel.

**July 17, 2016**

**Day 9**

**Sunday**

**Niseko to Sapporo**

After two peaceful nights, we leave the quiet mountain town of Niseko and head to Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido. Along the way we will stop at **Niki**, where we will get to do a little **cherry picking at a local farm**.

Once we get to Sapporo, we will check in to our hotel and then head to Makomanai to watch the **Hokkaido Makomanai Music Fireworks Festival**. It is held at the Makomanai Stadium, where we will witness a 20,000 firework display. We will view this awesome one hour fireworks show from reserved seats in the stadium.

**July 18, 2016**

**Day 10**

**Monday**

**Sapporo**

Our day begins with a visit to **Moerenuma Park**. It was designed by Japanese American artist, **Isamu Noguchi**, with the concept of a “park that is considered to be one complete sculpture”. In addition to the natural features of the park, there are several sculptures and buildings designed by Noguchi. Here you can rent a bicycle (on own) and ride around the large park or enjoy a leisurely stroll through the grounds.

The **Megmilk Snowbrand Museum** is our next stop, where we will learn about one of Sapporo’s largest dairy producers. Here we can learn about this company’s history from its early days to the modern era. We can see how the technology evolved and the wide variety of dairy products that they produce.

We will then visit the **Okurayama Ski Jump Stadium**. Designed for the 1972 Olympics, here we will have a chance to ride the ski lift up to the top of the hill and gain a view of the city below. We will then go to the **Winter Sports Museum**, where we can learn about winter sports, as well as try various simulators that will give you an idea of what it is like to play a winter sport.

**July 19, 2016**

**Day 11**

**Tuesday**

**Sapporo**

In the morning we will visit the **Ishiya Chocolate Factory**. This whimsical factory produces Hokkaido’s signature cookie, Shiroi Koi Bito. Here you can see how it is made, as well as its sugar crafts and other chocolate delights. There is chocolate lounge, where you can enjoy chocolate desserts and drinks, and a small toy museum.

Later we will visit **Sapporo's main shopping district**, where we can find **Japan's third largest 100 yen store**. We can also visit Sapporo's fish market, **Nijo Market**. Here you can find seafood and produce from Hokkaido. We will then make a stop at **Oodori Park**, the site of the annual Sapporo Snow Festival. During the summer it is home to the Sapporo Beer Garden and host to a city wide flower competition.

**July 20, 2016**

**Day 12**

**Wednesday**

**Sapporo to Chitose to Honolulu**

On our last day the morning is free to relax and do any last minute shopping and packing. We will head to the Chitose Airport early. There will be time to explore its three levels with everything from restaurants and shops to a Doraemon Play Area to the Royce Chocolate World and even a movie theater. You can enjoy onsen one more time at the airport (on own) or make one last stop at a hundred yen store.

Our flight departs in the evening and will return us to Honolulu on the morning of the day we left Japan. Upon arrival we must pass through immigration before we collect our luggage and then clear customs.