



Arctic experience in Abashiri, Shiretoko and Lake Akan. **This route is a self-drive and cannot be done otherwise.**

*In the north of Hokkaido, **Abashiri** is the coldest city of Japan. Here you will see spectacular winter scenery and the impressive phenomenon of drift ice (Ryuhyo in Japanese). The Sea of Okhotsk is known as the southernmost point of drifting sea ice originating from the Arctic. From January 20 to March 10, you can board an icebreaker and observe the dynamic drifting ice up close, and in certain areas, you can even experience walking on the packed ice.*

Day 1: / Memambetsu / Abashiri

Morning flight from Haneda to Memambetsu.

Pick up of your rental vehicle and depart for Abashiri.

Luggage drop-off at the hotel (Check in possible from 3 p.m.)

The day is dedicated to the visit of Abashiri. Meals at your convenience.

*The town of **Abashiri** is located on the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk, 350km from Sapporo in the north-east of the island of Hokkaido. This city is known for being home to the northernmost prison in Japan, as well as for the natural ice floes which attracts many tourists in winter.*

Visit Suggestions:

- **Okhotsk Ryuhyo Museum**
Science museum on drifting ice and the Sea of Okhotsk. This visit is highly recommended to understand the phenomenon before cruising on the icebreaker.
- **Abashiri Prison Museum**
A large open-air museum, which allows visitors to immerse themselves in the period of Hokkaido's development at the end of the 19th century, while discovering the living conditions of the former prisoners of the Japanese far north. Since 2016, eight of the buildings preserved in the museum have been designated as Important Cultural Property by the Japanese government. The highlight of the visit remains the original wooden prison buildings, on a star-shaped plan copied from that of the prison in Leuven, Belgium. It is a Ducpétiaux-type plan, in which a central guard house can watch over all the alleys at a glance.
- **Moyoro Museum**
Museum on the culture and history of the Moyoro people, who lived here during the Jomon period.



Ryuhyo Okhotsk Museum



Abashiri Prison Museum



Activity Suggestion:

✧ **Aurora cruise**

Cruise on an icebreaker Ship. Cruises to discover drifting ice leave every hour from the port aboard one of the two icebreakers.



Aurora Cruise on drifting ice

✧ **Bike ride**

You can ride along the beach coast with a fatbike (a bike specially designed for snowy roads).

Night at your hotel

Day 2: Abashiri/ Shiretoko

Breakfast at the hotel

Departure for Shiretoko and exploration of the peninsula. Lunch at your convenience.

*The **Shiretoko Peninsula** is located northeast of the city of Shari, facing the Sea of Okhotsk. The Shiretoko Peninsula contains many prehistoric remains dating back thousands of years. It is also a testament to the magnificence of nature. In the heart of winter, it hosts an absolutely incredible ice festival called Shiretoko Ryûhyô Fes (Shiretoko Drifting Ice Festival). It takes place on the evenings during the month of February. Let yourself be enchanted by its magical images!*



Visit Suggestions:

- **Walking on drifting ice**
This activity is only available for about a month of the year, and only in the Sea of Okhotsk, east of Hokkaido. In order to walk on the ice floe, you must wear a special wetsuit to keep you warm. You can even take a dip in the icy waters!
- **Snowshoe excursion and forest wildlife observation**
This tour takes you off the beaten path and explores the virgin forests of Shiretoko with snowshoes.
- **Furepe waterfall snowshoe excursion and wildlife observation**
Your guide will lead you across the forest to one of Shiretoko's main attractions: the Furepe waterfall. Winter transforms the waterfall into mysteriously shaped pillars of aqua blue ice.

Dinner and Night at the hotel

Day 3: Shiretoko / Iozan / Mashu / Lake Kussharo / Akan

Breakfast at the hotel

Departure for the region of Akan and personal discovery of lakes and volcanoes

Lunch at your convenience.

Departure to the volcanic site of **Iozan** to see a fantastic snowy landscape dotted with smoking sulfuric fumaroles, before heading to Lake Mashu.

Visit Suggestions:

- **Iozan volcanic site**
This volcano was once home to the largest sulfur-extraction operations in Japan. This mountain is covered with impressive white smoke that rises from over from 1,500 craters.



Sulfuric fumes in Iozan



- **Mashu lake**

A beautiful crater lake surrounded by snow-capped mountains! The panorama over the lake is spectacular!



Mashu lake

- **Lake Kussharo**

In winter, it is home to many wild swans. The lake is frozen, but hot springs always leave some water open for the swans. It is possible to take a dip in the hot springs while enjoying the view of swans and mountains.

Continue towards Lake Akan. Check-in at the hotel.

Visit Suggestions:

- **The Ainu Cultural Center of Lake Akan**

Akan is dedicated to the Ainu people, the aboriginal culture of Hokkaido. Originally very different from the Japanese, they have today been almost completely assimilated. Opportunity to attend traditional dance and song performances in the evening.

Dinner and Night at the hotel

Day 4: Akan/ Kushiro / Haneda

Breakfast at the hotel.

Sightseeing and lunch at your convenience.

Activity Suggestions:

- ◇ Enjoy the hot springs in your hotel
- ◇ Snowmobile or walk on the frozen lake



- ◇ Wakasagi (Smelt) ice fishing
You can fish for smelt after drilling a hole in the frozen Lake Abashiri, and enjoy your catch onsite.
- ◇ Observe the magnificent Tancho (Japanese red-crowned crane) at the Kushiro wetlands
This is the only place in the world where these extremely rare and breathtaking birds live year-round.

Transfer to Kushiro airport and end of car rental.

Flight to Haneda.

We are here to help you plan and achieve your wishes.
We can shorten or extend your stay, or add other destinations.

Do you enjoy freedom and **lack of constraints**?
We can leave you with a personalized list of interesting activities and locations, giving you the freedom to wander around as you please during your stay.

Do you want a bulletproof plan and **hassle-free getaway**?
We can arrange everything for you in advance, whether it be reserving activities, luggage shipments, car rental or guided tours, and more.

Feel free to contact us for a personalized itinerary