

Japan's Far North

7 Day Hiking Tour



The breathtaking mountains and wild coastline of Japan's northern frontier will quench your thirst for adventure on this island hopping multi-day guided hiking tour.

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About the Tour

Start	Finish	Grading	Season
Wakkanai	Wakkanai	Intermediate Hiking	May to Oct

About Japan's Far North

This tour is perfect for adventurers who dream of deep exploration into remote corners of Japan that most travellers would never have the opportunity to visit. Mountains meet the ocean on these unique islands.

The tour takes place in the Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu National Park, which sits at the very top of Hokkaido and is the northernmost national park in Japan. The southern tip of Sakhalin Island (Russia) is only 40 kms / 25 miles away – this is as far north in Japan as you can get!

The islands have a distinct ecosystem with striking Siberia-like landscapes in close proximity to the ocean. Leave the sticky summer heat behind and enjoy the refreshing summer hiking in this subarctic region!

Tour highlights

- Island hop in Japan's northernmost National Park.
- Hike on the "floating flower garden" – Rebun Island.
- Enjoy views of the amazing Mt. Rishiri, a stratovolcano towering above the ocean.
- Explore a white walking path on Cape Soya, the northernmost point in Japan.
- Savour the Northern Islands' seafood-oriented gastronomy.

What is the hiking like on this tour?

The hikes on this tour are a balance between relaxed and challenging. The longest day is 11.1 km / 6.9 mi with 790 m / 2,600 ft elevation gain, however there are also shorter days of around 4 km / 2.5 mi. There are times where you need to watch your footing on root-strewn mountain trails or slippery grass slopes. Some sections also take us over cliff tops. However, for the majority of the tour you can stride out smooth gravel paths or forest trails. Just be prepared for the wild weather and strong wind that shapes these remote islands.

This tour is perfect for adventurous walkers who favour stretching their legs and exploring lesser-known locations over bagging mountain peaks.

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Itinerary at a glance

Day	Activities	Km	Miles	Meals ¹
1	Meet your group in Wakkanai	0	0	D ▾
2	Ferry to Rebun Island, Hike on Rebun Island	4.1	2.5	B, L, D ▾
3	Hike on Rebun Island	8.5	5.3	B, L, D ▾
4	Ferry to Rishiri Island, Hike on Rishiri Island	3.5	2.2	B, D ▾
5	Hike on Rishiri Island	11.1	6.9	B, D ▾
6	Ferry to Wakkanai, Walk the White Shell Path	2.7	1.7	B, D ▾
7	Farewells in Wakkanai	0	0	B ▾

Accommodation

Day	Type	Location	Ensuite Toilet	Ensuite Shower	Onsen	Laundry
1	Hotel ▾	Wakkanai	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Minshuku ▾ ²	Rebun Island	✓		✓	✓
3	Minshuku ▾	Rebun Island	✓		✓	✓
4	Hotel ▾	Rishiri Island	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Hotel ▾	Rishiri Island	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Hotel ▾	Wakkanai	✓	✓	✓	✓

We may change the facility options if our preferred accommodation is unavailable.

¹ B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

² Minshuku is a Japanese style guest house.

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Travel style

This hiking tour is a series of day hikes; either return, loop or traverse routes. We always come back to our van at the end of the day and transfer to our accommodation. This means your overnight luggage can stay in the van and you can experience the best of Japan's Far North hiking with just a light day pack!

Adverse weather

While we try to organise everything, mother nature is out of our control. If the weather is too bad to safely hike, such as a typhoon or sudden storm, we will travel to the next inn in our support vehicle. Along the way we will still stop at local restaurants and visit indoor facilities, so you can still experience the charm of the area while travelling safely and comfortably.

What's included

- 6 nights accommodation on a twin share basis
- 6 breakfasts, 2 lunches & 6 dinners
- Ferry to/from Rebun & Rishiri Islands
- All transport as described in the itinerary
- English speaking local guide(s)

What's not included

- Airfare
- Any optional activities
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenses
- Drinks with included meals

When do you run this tour?

We run this tour in August and September, with the final trip often extending into early October. While May to June is a celebrated time to visit Rishiri and Rebun for their wildflowers at peak bloom, we avoid operating tours in these peak months as the trails and tourist services can be crowded. Late summer into early autumn is a brilliant window to explore the islands in a quieter mood, with comfortable hiking conditions and smoother logistics. From September to October, the scenery sees a change in colour with the leaves ablaze with yellows, oranges and reds. Beyond this, the snows begin to fall and make much of the routes impassable until the following spring.

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Why hike in Hokkaido?

Diverse trails

Our mountains nationwide are covered with hiking trails which date back to Shugendo culture, Japan's ancient mountain asceticism. The trails were built over the years to reach the most prominent and sacred peaks. Information about these trails, however, remains untranslated to a great extent, especially so in rural areas. Together with our experienced local guides, you'll hit the road less travelled and explore hiking trails which date back centuries!

Flora & fauna

Hokkaido has evolved in its own unique way for millennia which has given rise to its unique flora and fauna. In the last ice age, Hokkaido was separated from mainland Japan but retained its connection with the Russian island of Sakhalin. Due to this, there are many species found only here within Japan, including brown bears, squirrels and chipmunks. Hiking in Hokkaido provides plenty of opportunities to spot these unique species.

Culture

There's no better way to experience Japanese culture than hiking with a local guide. Bathe in natural hot springs, savour the fantastic fresh seafood, local vegetables, fruit and even ice cream. And to complete your day as a Japanese adventurer, fall into a well earned sleep in futon bedding on tatami floors. It doesn't get any more Japanese than this!

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How to book this tour?

We will send you a link to our online sign up form, where we ask for the travel information of all the members travelling with you.

Once we receive this, we will send you a payment link for your tour deposit, which is JPY 50,000 per person. **We will confirm your booking upon receipt of your deposit payment.**

The deposit is treated as a part of the tour price. Payment of the balance will be reminded by email, which is generally 5 weeks prior to the tour departure date.

We accept payment via **Wise** or **Flywire**. We will send you payment links for both options, and you must use one of the payment links provided by us.

Wise payments are available in Japanese Yen only and require you to have a Wise account (Wise-to-Wise transfer only). You must pay any currency exchange or transfer fees yourself.

Flywire payments allow credit card payment or domestic bank transfer converted to your home currency. Credit card payments via Flywire incur an additional service charge of 1.5%, while domestic bank transfers via Flywire do not incur this service charge.

By paying for a deposit or full amount, you confirm that you have read, understand and agree to these [Terms and Conditions](#).

What does the Minimum Number mean?

This is a mixed group tour and **we accept bookings for this tour from one person up**. However, our scheduled group tours require a minimum number of bookings for us to guarantee the departure of the tour, and to offer the tour at the price quoted. **The minimum number of booked guests to guarantee this tour is four people.**

If you book with less than four people, we will hold your place on the tour and wait for another group to join the tour. If the number of guests has not reached the minimum number by 60 days prior to departure, we will give you the option to cancel or to upgrade to a private departure.

If you choose to cancel, we will refund the amount in Japanese Yen that you have paid us. You're welcome to check with us at any time about the status of bookings.

Please be advised that we will not be liable to compensate for any inconvenience or incidental expenses that might have incurred to you, including airline tickets.

Single Supplement

Our tours are priced on a twin share basis. Those travelling by themselves will need to pay an additional supplement for use of a single room. If you are happy to share a room with another guest – of the same gender – then let us know at the time of booking. If we match you with another solo traveller then we can discount the single supplement for both of you.

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Travel Insurance

All guests joining our tours are required to have travel insurance. Please make sure you have a valid travel insurance, covering the kind of activities you are undertaking during our tour, cancellations, loss of personal belongings, and any unforeseen circumstances while travelling.

Travel to the Meeting Point

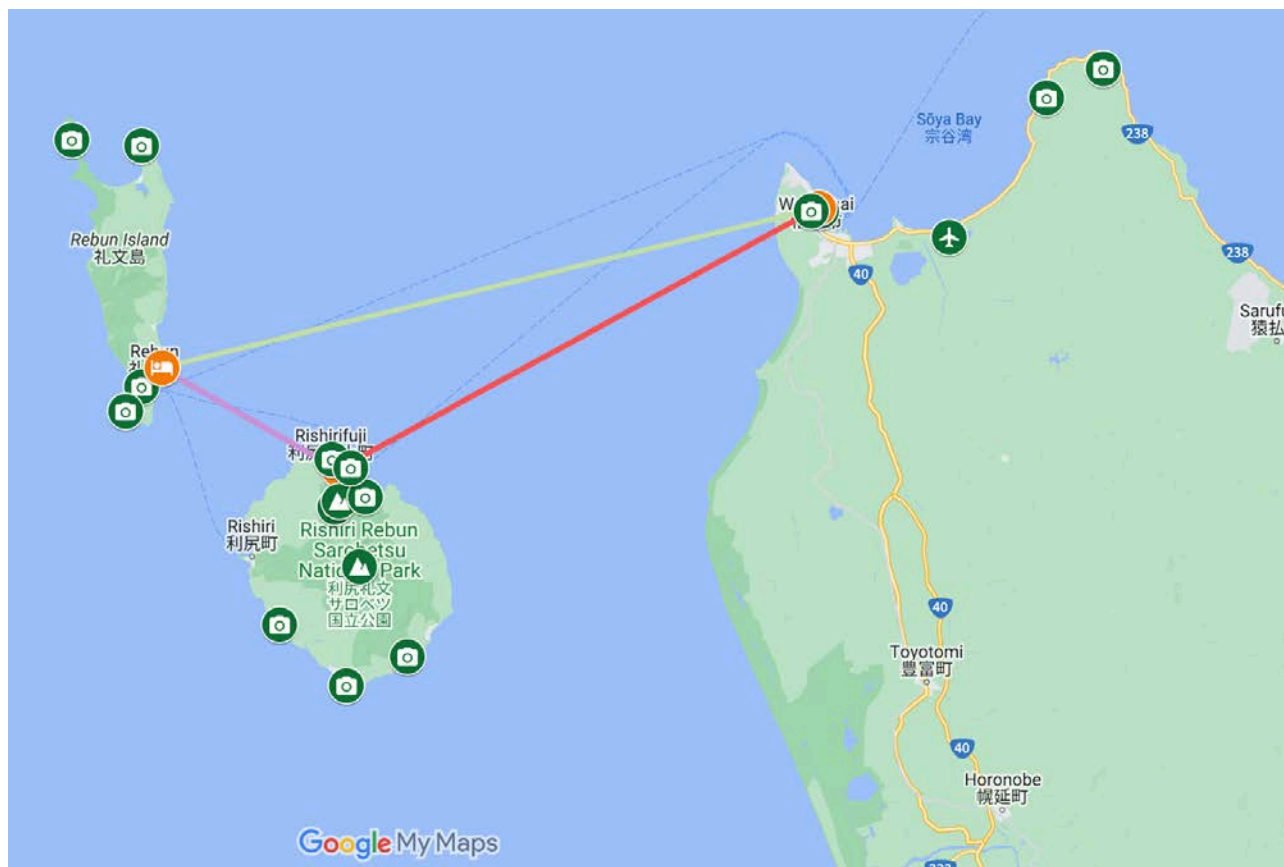
We will meet in Central Wakkanai at 6:00 pm on the first day. The closest airport to Wakkanai City is Wakkanai Airport (WKJ). The airport shuttle bus for downtown Wakkanai is scheduled to connect with all incoming flights from Tokyo and Sapporo. The fare is 800 yen per person.

An alternative to flying is to travel by train (Japan Railway, abbr. JR). Trains travel 3 times a day between Sapporo and Wakkanai and the journey takes just over 5 hours. The fare is 11,420 yen (one way) for a reserved seat. Upon booking, please let us know your travel plans and we will confirm in detail where and what time we will meet on the first day.

You can search train timetables in English on [Japan Transit Planner website](#).

Tour map

To view the route on Google My Maps, [click here](#).



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Day-to-Day Itinerary

Day 1 – Meet your group in Wakkanai

This tour kicks off in Wakkanai, the northernmost city in Hokkaido and Japan.

Once everyone is together by 6:00 pm today, we will hold a short meeting to introduce ourselves and brief everyone on the upcoming adventure. We'll then have dinner together to get to know each other and to get excited about the amazing trip ahead!

Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
D	0 km 0 mi	0 m 0 ft	Hotel in Wakkanai

Day 2 – Ferry to Rebun Island, Hike on Rebun Island

This morning, we'll catch the ferry to Rebun Island at around 10:00 am and in just under 2 hours we will arrive on Rebun, nicknamed the "floating flower garden".

Japanese flower lovers flock to this island each June to admire the rare alpine flowers that can be found at unusually low elevations. Later in the season, we are still able to enjoy our island adventure without the crowds but the remnants of summer can still be felt in the warm water and long twilight.



After getting off the ferry, we will explore the southern part of Rebun Island, hiking along the Momojwa Trail. The trail starts near the ferry terminal and takes us down to the southern tip of the island. This popular trail provides unique scenery combining the ocean, rugged coastline, neighbouring Rishiri Island and colourful flowers along the trail.

Once we've finished the hike, we'll head over to our accommodation for the next two nights. Dinner tonight will no doubt feature the local speciality – plenty of fresh seafood!

Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
B, L, D	4.1 km 2.5 mi	135 m 440 ft	Minshuku on Rebun Island

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Day 3 – Hike on Rebun Island

This morning, we will explore the northern part of Rebun Island starting from Cape Sukoton. The cape is at the northernmost end of Rebun Island, overlooking small rocky islands dotted in the blue ocean extending to the north. On a clear day, you will be able to catch sight of Russia's Sakhalin Island over La Pérouse Strait. This is as far north as you can get!



We'll enjoy walking on the scenic coastal trail exploring Cape Gorota and Cape Sky. The blue sea that hugs rocky coves and the fishing villages here and there provide a unique island hiking experience.

Once we complete the walk, we will travel by van to hopefully see more of Rebun's flora and fauna. Cape Kaneda is our favourite location to spot wild seals, which are often seen sunbathing on rocks on a fine day. After we finish our hikes for today, we'll return to our accommodation for another delicious dinner.

Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
B, L, D	8.5 km 5.3 mi	350 m 1,150 ft	Minshuku on Rebun Island

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Day 4 – Ferry to Rishiri Island, Hike on Rishiri Island

This morning (Jun-Sep) or in the early afternoon (May & Oct), we’ll jump on a ferry for Rishiri Island. The forty-minute ferry ride takes us to a completely different landscape; Rishiri is literally an island volcano with a summit of 1,721 m / 5,646 ft above sea level.

Upon arrival, we’ll hike the often overlooked lower section of the Mt. Rishiri trail through conifer forest to Kanro Sensui, a freshwater spring renowned for its mild and sweet flavour. This spring is renowned throughout Japan for featuring in the top 100 most famous drinkable waters in the country. So make sure you’ve got a refillable bottle with you on today’s hike so you can give the water a try for yourself!

After the hike, we’ll head to our hotel for the next couple of nights, where dinner will be served.



Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	3.5 km 2.2 mi	210 m 690 ft	Hotel on Rishiri Island

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Day 5 – Hike on Rishiri Island

Today, we'll do a combined hike up to a viewpoint high above the trees on Mt. Rishiri at 760 m (2,493 ft), also visit the summit of Mt. Pon, which features great views of Mt. Rishiri itself. These hikes give us a taste of the best of hiking on Rishiri – rugged trails that push above the tree line, with the ocean lapping the shores way beneath us – while not having to do the full 11 hour slog to the summit.



We'll start from Oshidomari Trailhead at 220 m (722 ft), where we finished the previous day's hike. We set off back through the forest before quickly getting above the trees as we climb up to the viewpoint. After taking in the airy views from our high point, we head back down the trail before branching off to Mt. Pon.

If we have time, we will continue on from Mt. Pon through the native conifer forest at the foot of Mt. Rishiri to Himenuma, a famous little lake that reflects Mt. Rishiri on its mirror-like surface.

Tonight we dine out at a local izakaya bar-restaurant to celebrate our final night on the island.

Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	11.1 km 6.9 mi	790 m 2,590 ft	Hotel on Rishiri Island

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Day 6 – Ferry to Wakkanai, Walk the White Shell Path

We'll hop on a ferry back to Wakkanai today. For travellers on this tour in June to September, we have some time before the ferry's lunchtime arrival, so we'll be able to enjoy a hike around Cape Peshi, a lookout point which offers amazing, panoramic views of the Sea of Japan, Mt. Rishiri above, Oshidomari Port below and Rebun Island on the horizon.



Upon arrival in Wakkanai, we'll head to Cape Soya, the northernmost point of Japan. We'll walk through the cape's beautiful pastoral landscape before we pick up a popular cross-country route known as the "White Shell Path". The path is literally that – a road made from crushed white shells! Stretching across 2.9 km / 1.8 miles, we'll follow the road to its very end. As we walk, we'll have plenty of time to reminisce about our trip.

After the walk, we'll head to our accommodation in Wakkanai city before we all hit the town for a delicious local dinner to celebrate the end of a successful tour.

Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	3.0 km 1.9 mi	141 m 460 ft	Hotel in Wakkanai

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Day 7 – Farewells in Wakkanai

Today, we'll all go our separate ways after breakfast. If you are departing from Wakkanai Airport or Wakkanai Station this morning before 11am, your guide can give you a lift.

If you wish to extend your stay in Wakkanai, we can help to arrange your post-tour accommodation and other activities. Please indicate if you would like to extend your stay at the time of booking.

Make sure you have not left anything behind before you head to your next destination. Itterasshai!

Note: There's always the chance that wind or wave conditions could mean that the morning ferry does not run on Day 6, meaning today, the last day of the tour, becomes the day we have to leave for Wakkanai. As a precaution, we suggest looking at afternoon or evening transportation departing Wakkanai today, or possibly even adding another night in Wakkanai to make sure you do not miss any travel connections – especially if you plan to connect from a domestic flight to an international one.

Meals			
B			

Our recommended reading

[When is the best time to hike in Hokkaido?](#)

[Hiking Safely in Hokkaido](#)

[What to pack for Hokkaido?](#)

[What is a disposable toilet bag?](#)

[Hokkaido Guide Stories – Japan's Far North](#)

[How to onsen \(like a local!\)](#)

[A Local's Guide on What to Expect When Staying in Hokkaido](#)

[Vegan & Vegetarian in Hokkaido](#)

[Hokkaido Travel Tips & Common Questions](#)

[The Ainu, from a Hokkaido local's perspective](#)

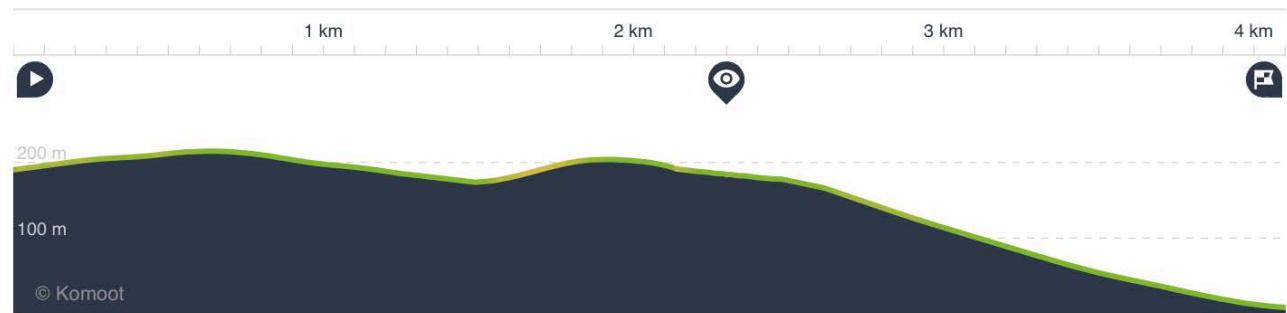
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Elevation profiles

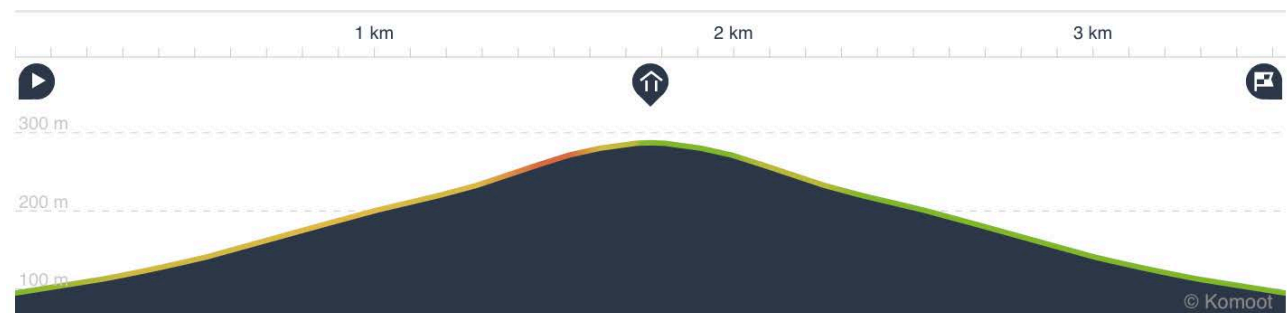
Day 2 - Momojiwa Trail on Rebun Island **Distance - 4.1 km / 2.5 mi** **Ascent - 135 m / 440 ft**



Day 3 - Cape Trail on Rebun Island **Distance - 8.5 km / 5.3 mi** **Ascent - 350 m / 1,150 ft**



Day 4 - Mt. Rishiri Foothill Hike **Distance - 3.5 km / 2.2 mi** **Ascent - 210 m / 690 ft**



Day 5 - Mt. Rishiri to Himenuma Traverse **Distance - 11.1 km / 6.9 mi** **Ascent - 790 m / 2,590 ft**



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Day 6 - White Shell Path Walk

Distance - 2.9 km / 1.8 mi Ascent - 50 m / 165 ft

