

Hidaka Ainu Adventure



The Hidaka area, where this tour will take place, is located in central Hokkaido, and is a historic region for the indigenous Ainu people, who live in Hokkaido and surrounding areas.

British explorer Isabella Bird visited the Hidaka area on horseback and on foot to meet Ainu people. She spent several days living with Ainu hosts, dedicated herself to learning about their way of life, customs and religion, and shared what she had learned with the outside world.

On this tour, you'll walk along the same path that Bird is said to have taken, enjoy camping that mirrors what Bird would have experienced, cycle through the stunning Hidaka scenery, hike up Mt. Apoi, which appears in Ainu legends, and more. Along the way you'll learn all about the unique culture of Hokkaido's indigenous people, experience Hidaka's famous hot springs and enjoy delicious cuisine with fresh seafood, premium beef and a variety of vegetables. And you'll have plenty of opportunities to get to know the friendly people who live here.

The weather in September is cool and mild, with an average temperature of around 15°C. Delve into Hidaka's fascinating culture at one of the best times of the year to visit.

Highlights:

- Walk the road traveled by British explorer Isabella Bird during her visit to Hidaka's Ainu community in 1878.
- Experience the Ainu people's way of life and learn about their connection to nature.
- Climb Mt. Apoi and learn about how the Ainu people interact with its unique ecosystem.

Location:

Hidaka area

Main Activity: Hiking

Difficulty: 3

Tour Dates: September 6-10, 2023

Pax: Minimum: 4 Maximum: 10

Price: JPY 260,000

[Route map](#)

[Day-by-day Itinerary](#)

[What's included](#)

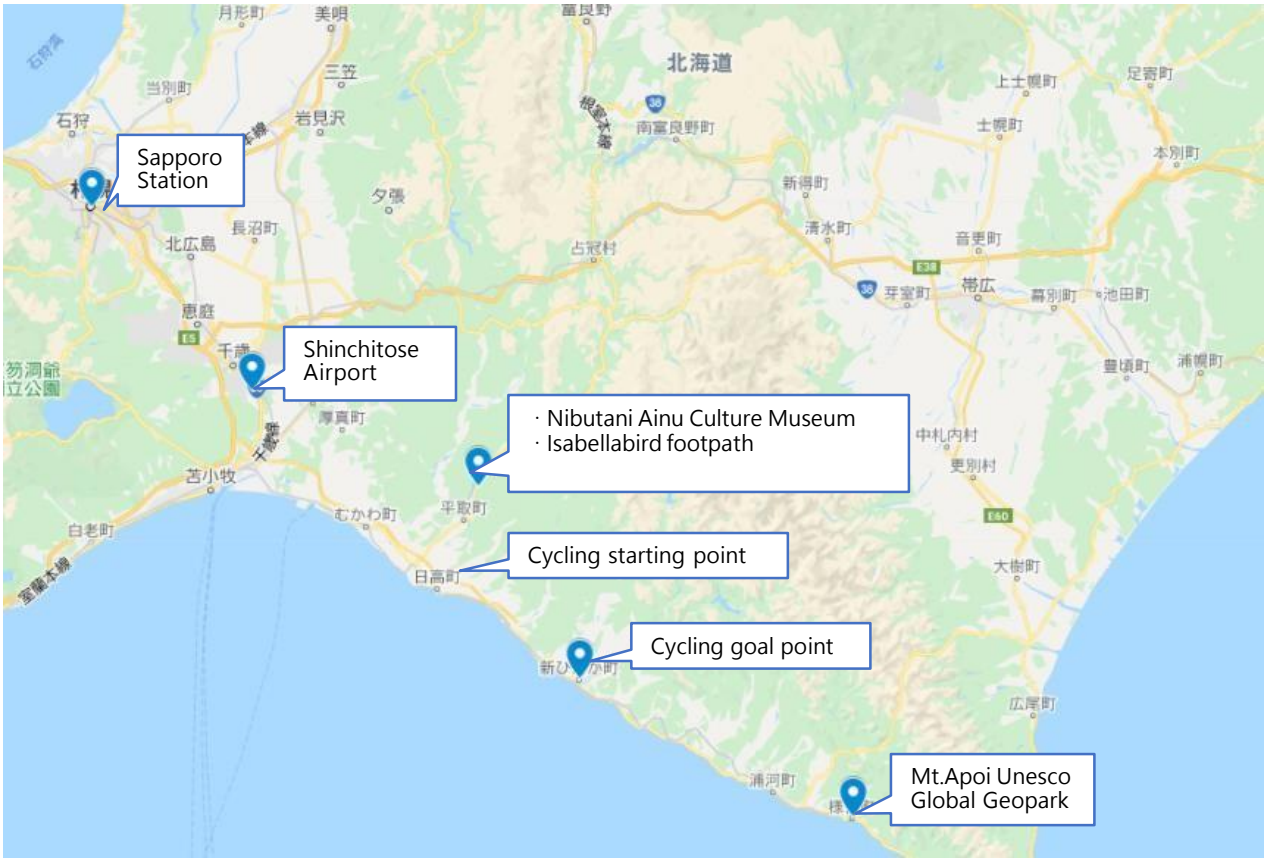
[What we provide / What to bring](#)

[About us](#)

[Information and Requirements](#)

[Reservation & Cancellation Policy](#)

Route map



Day-by-day Itinerary

September 6 - Day 1: Start of tour and visit to Nibutani Ainu Cultural Museum with hands-on activities

Take a morning flight and meet us at Sapporo's New Chitose Airport in time for the start of the tour at 1:00pm. Your JTB guide will be at the domestic arrivals gate holding a sign. When everyone has arrived, you'll be taken to the Hidaka area (around 1.5 hours away) in a tour bus. An orientation will be held on board, where you'll hear about what we'll do during the tour and points to be aware of. Your guide will also confirm points such as dietary restrictions. Lunch will not be included, so please eat before meeting us.

First you'll visit Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum, where a curator will tell you about the exhibits. You'll also get to try traditional activities such as Ainu dancing, making a traditional mouth harp called a *mukkuri* and carving an Ainu pattern into a wooden coaster. You'll get an in-depth view of Ainu traditions from a variety of angles, including the ways in which the area's abundant nature inspired wisdom and teachings that are still passed down the generations today. This will add context to the things you'll see during the rest of the tour.

After our museum visit, we'll head to Biratori Onsen Yukara, where you'll spend the night. Dinner is a traditional *kaiseki* multi-course meal with premium Biratori wagyu beef and fresh local vegetables. Make sure you try the hot spring—the clear water is gentle on the skin and will make you feel warm all the way through. There's also a bath with highly carbonated water, a rare feature in Hokkaido, which is said to have excellent health benefits.

Dinner

Biratori Onsen Yukara

Kaiseki multi-course meal with Biratori wagyu beef and fresh vegetables

Activity

Cultural activity

Difficulty

1

September 7 - Day 2: Isabella L. Bird Foot Path and AINU Culture Tour

After breakfast, you'll walk the Isabella L. Bird Foot Path with a member of the Biratori Tourism Association and the Trailing Isabella Bird Association. This 12km path is the one said to have been taken by British explorer Isabella Bird on her visit to Hidaka's Ainu community. Our walk will start in the local athletic park, with beautiful views of livestock farms and rice fields. We might even see wildlife such as deer and Steller's sea eagles. Along the way, we'll visit a farm that grows Biratori's famous Nispa's Lover tomatoes ("nispa" is the Ainu word for an elder). The last stretch of the walk takes us through forest, finishing at Yoshitsune Shrine where the chief priest (*guji*) will lead a prayer for safe travels.

At the time of Bird's visit, Japan had only just reopened its ports and non-Japanese people could not visit freely. On top of this, much of Hokkaido was undeveloped. What made Bird want to visit Hidaka? What were her thoughts and feelings? Some food for thought as you walk the 12km with your guides.

Lunch

Teuchi Soba Fuji

Soba noodles with tempura of Biratori's famous tomatoes

After lunch, we'll head to Biratori's campground, where an Ainu guide will share unique local knowledge the Ainu people have acquired over the years that they have lived in harmony with nature on these lands. Participate in a prayer ceremony to the spirit-deities (*kamuy*), take a stroll in the mountains where the Ainu go hunting, visit an Ainu hunting shelter called a *kuca cise* and try using traditional hunting equipment. As you listen to the guide and try your hand at some of the activities, you'll find yourself thinking of the way Bird did the same thing all those years ago and how much she must have learned about Ainu culture by joining them in their farming work.

After learning about Ainu culture and hunting, you will have a chance to share stories from the day and ask any questions you might have as you prepare dinner and enjoy a BBQ at the campground with local Ainu and other people from the Biratori region. After dinner you will return to Biratori Onsen Yukara for the night.

Activity	Walking(12km walk, around 3 hours) Cultural activity
-----------------	--

Difficulty	1
-------------------	---

Dinner

Barbecue at the campground
(Vegetarian options available)
Yuk ohaw (traditional Ainu soup with Yezo sika venison)
Amam (proso millet rice)
BBQ with local vegetables and meat

Activity	Walking (12km walk, around 3 hours) Cultural activity
Difficulty	1

September 8 - Day 3 : Cycling

At 8:30am, we'll start the morning by warming up at the campground with an Ainu language version of *rajio taiso*, a Japanese exercise style where light exercises are done by following audio instructions set to music. After that, you and some Biratori locals will enjoy a breakfast made with local Hidaka ingredients: thick slices of bread toasted on a charcoal fire, fried eggs, Siberian onion sausages, cheese, and salad with Biratori's famous tomatoes.

At 10:00am, a chartered bus will take you back to the Isabella L. Bird Foot Path where we'll set off on the first leg of our biking tour from Biratori to Shinhidaka. We'll cycle for 41.7km in total, with some breaks to eat lunch and take a rest. We'll be cycling downhill for the second half of the tour. With a spectacular canyon along the Saru River, primeval forest and a sunset view at the end, this tour offers one beautiful coastal scene after another.

Lunch

Amaya

Makunouchi-bento with local ingredients

After refueling with a makunouchi-bento lunch made with local ingredients, we'll hop back on our bikes and embark on the remaining 28.6km of the course. The mountain biking tour will end at Michi-no-Eki Mitsuishi roadside station, arriving around 4:00-4:30pm.

From here, you'll be driven to Urakawa, around 30 minutes away, where you'll enjoy a mountain hike the next day.

We'll arrive at Urakawa Yushun Village AERU at about 5:10pm. Here you'll have dinner while listening to a talk about Mt. Apoi by Daisuke Sasaki, who is certified as an International Mountain Guide. Daisuke will tell you how the land and nature you see today is shaped by the incredible activity that took place underground, focusing on the geological movement that has taken place, the nature in the area and how people in Hidaka coexist with that nature. The fascinating facts in the talk will leave you looking forward to the hike even more.

Dinner

Urakawa Yushun Village AERU

Kaiseki meal made with local ingredients

Activity	Cycling (41.7km)
Difficulty	3

September 9 - Day 4: Hike up Mt. Apoi

A selection of three types of bread and a pastry prepared by a local bakery will be provided for lunch, which can be picked up from the hotel reception. After breakfast, you'll leave the hotel at 8:15am and walk to Mt. Apoi Geopark Visitor Center. This is when your adventure will begin!

After learning the general history and topography of the geopark at the visitor center, you'll start your hike with Daisuke. The hike to the summit (810m above sea level) and back is around 10km, and will take around 5 hours.

About an hour into your hike, you'll reach the edge of Mt. Apoi's forest and walk up a long, steep, rocky path to the next rest area. Located on a ridge are Uma-nose Flower Fields, which offer a stunning view of the Pacific Ocean to the south and the ridges of the Hidaka Mountain Range far away in the north. Here you'll refuel with a lunch set made by a local bakery. During the final hike to the summit, you'll see a wide variety of beautiful alpine flowers.

After taking in the views from the summit, you'll head back down the way you came to the visitor center and be taken back to the hotel to recharge in the hot spring.

Lunch

Panpakapan

Three types of bread, a pastry and coffee

Activity	Hiking (altitude 810m, 10km walk, around 5 hours)
Difficulty	3

After your mountain hike, you'll check into AERU, around 30 minutes away, where you'll be staying. This hotel was built amid abundant nature—it's surrounded by a vast pasture with an area of over 1.2km²—with the aim of providing a place for guests to enjoy the nature. The area often appears in shows and movies about Hokkaido. The indoor hot spring has a stunning view of the pasture and the Hidaka Mountain Range.

For dinner, you'll be treated to a Genghis Khan party with your fellow hikers. This hearty local Hokkaido dish, featuring tasty lamb and mutton grilled in a sweet BBQ-style sauce with vegetables on a metal skillet resembling an ancient soldier's helmet, is just what you need to refuel after a long day in the mountains.

Dinner

Urakawa Yushun Village AERU

Genghis Khan (barbecued lamb and mutton) party at the hotel with fellow hikers.

Activity	Hiking (altitude 810m, 10km walk, around 5 hours)
Difficulty	3

September 10 - Day 5: Travel back to Sapporo

After breakfast, you will be driven to the location of the Adventure Travel World Summit in Sapporo. We will be on the road for about three hours, with a restroombreak on the way.

Accommodation

September 6: Biratori Onsen Yukara

<http://www.biratori-onsen.com/>

Single-occupant twin rooms (with toilet)

- Wi-Fi available.
- The hotel has a hot spring bath

September 7: Biratori Onsen Yukara

same as previous day

September 8: Urakawa Yushun Village AERU

<https://aeru-urakawa.co.jp/>

- Single-occupant twin rooms
 - While some rooms have a shower and bath, most guests will need to use the communal bath.
 - Wi-Fi available
 - There is laundromat, it cost 200yen, if you wish.
 - Large public bath, in the hotel

September 9: Urakawa Yushun Village AERU

same as previous day

What's included

- English speaking guide
- 4 nights' accommodation
- Pick-up and drop-off at hotel
- All meals according to itinerary
- Safety equipment

What's not included

- Lunch on arrival day
- Lunch on departure day
- Alcoholic beverages
- Travel insurance

What we provide

- Lunch
- Extra food
- Portable toilet
- Trash bag
- First aid kit

What to bring

- Backpack large enough for all your equipment. Must be well fitted, adjusted correctly and comfortable.
- Rain covers for your backpack
- Mid- to high-cut hiking boots
- Rain gear
- Base layers (top and bottom)
- Walking socks
- Underwear
- Fleece or down jacket
- Gloves
- Long-sleeved shirt and long pants
- Towel
- Water bottle or hydration system (1L or more.)
- Face mask
- Any personal medications
- Mobile phone

Optional

- Camera, video camera
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Portable Wi-Fi (Using your own Wi-Fi is recommended as some areas and hotels might not have a strong signal.)
- Something to entertain you, just in case...(books, games, binoculars, etc.)

About us



Perfect moments, always

JTB -- "Perfect moments, always."

The JTB Group traces its roots back to 1912 when "Japan Tourist Bureau" was formed to attract international travelers to Japan and assist with their travel needs. While our activities and clientele have expanded greatly since then, the JTB Group remains aligned around a core purpose: bringing people, places, and possibilities together. Developing innovative services and solutions that enable our customers to connect more deeply and meaningfully. Contributing to the creation of sustainable communities and a more peaceful and interconnected planet.

No matter how the world changes, the JTB Group remains as committed now as we were 108 years ago to delivering unrivaled excitement, value and satisfaction. At its essence, JTB's legacy resides in the bonds of trust we have forged with our customers, communities, and stakeholders.

The JTB Group is poised to embark on the next exciting chapter in its incredible journey, staying attuned to and aligned with the evolving needs of a new era, maintaining its position as a digital trailblazer, and delivering real value that our customers can feel.

Guide

Our mountain guide, Daisuke Sasaki has excellent professional skills recognized by the International Federation of Mountain Guide Associations (IFMGA), and has guiding experience not only in Japan but around the world.

"I was raised in central Sapporo, but from a young age I was drawn to the wilderness of the mountains where bears roam and the vibrant nature of Bankei [an area in Sapporo]. Each trip made the world feel bigger to me, and before I knew it, a happy-go-lucky group of friends and I were off exploring mountains around the world, climbing, skiing and having the time of our lives.

"We went on treks where we admired flowers and fall foliage and awoke in our tents with new dreams fresh in our minds. We hiked along rivers to find cool spots in summer. We climbed up high and enjoyed the sight of the sky above us and the land below. We went on adventures, feeling like we were exploring places where no human has gone before. We went back country skiing through turns I'll remember for the rest of my life.

"And now I want to take you on mountain adventures you'll remember forever."

Qualifications

- Certified by the Japan Mountain Guide Association
- Certified as an International Mountain Guide
- Certified by Japan Backcountry Ski Guide Association
- Lecturer at the National Climbing Training Institute
- Lecturer in the Mountain Professional Course of the International Natural Environment Outdoor College



Information and Requirements

Dietary Restrictions

If you are allergic to nuts or seafood, or if you need vegetarian, vegan or gluten-free meals, please let us know in advance and we will provide you alternatives to the greatest extent possible.

Emergency Response Plan

Hokkaido has established the Hokkaido Outdoor Qualification System so that everyone can enjoy outdoor activities safely in seasonal wilderness. Your qualified guide has passed a practical test, is trained in lifesaving and emergency rescue and possesses general knowledge of Hokkaido and the activities offered here.

A mobile phone signal is available at all accommodation. Your guide will promptly respond to emergencies in cooperation with a nearby medical institution.

In the event of any problems such as broken gear or minor mechanical equipment problems, rest assured that we will assist you.

Weather Conditions

Hidaka has many rainy days in September, and it can get very cold in the morning and evening. You may feel chilly, so it's best to bring a thick coat such as a fleece or raincoat. The average temperature is 15°C, and it generally does not get warmer than 20°C. Mt. Apoi's low altitude makes it great for a day trip, but there are steep rocks from the middle upward and the weather may change often and quickly, so be sure to bring a full set of equipment.

Reservation & Cancellation Policy

Payment Methods

Trip Price: JPY260,000 (tax included) per adult (10 attendees)

JPY280,000 (tax included) per adult (8 attendees)

Only payments by credit card will be accepted.

The due date for the payment is August 1st, 2022. Please note that payments will not be accepted after this date.

How to pay by credit card

Visa, MasterCard, JCB, AMEX and Diners Club are accepted.

Your credit card statement will show that the payment has been made to JTB Corp., the agent handling registration.

Cancellations

*In the event of a cancellation, your deposit will be refunded after deducting the cancellation fees shown below.

*JTB will refund the remainder of the tour fee within 7 days of the day after cancellation if the refund is requested before the departure of the tour.

*Cancellation fee when notice is given:

21 or more days prior to the departure date of the tour	
8-20 days prior to the departure date of the tour	20% of the tour fee
2-7 days prior to the departure date of the tour	30% of the tour fee
1 days prior to the day of departure	40% of the tour fee
On the day of departure	50% of the tour fee
After the day of departure, or if no notice is given	100% of the tour fee

Disclaimer

Trip Cancellations: JTB reserves the right to cancel or change the itinerary of a tour. In the event that we need to cancel a tour, we will refund 100% of your costs.

Weather conditions are almost never severe enough to warrant cancelling a tour; cancellations only occur as a result of truly exceptional events that could not be predicted.

JTB is not responsible for compensating any additional costs such as flights.

Terms and Conditions for Agent-organized Tours

Tour Operator / Contact



Perfect moments, always

JTB Corp. HOKKAIDO Branch
c/o Urban Net Sapporo Bldg, 1-2 Nishi 6-chome,
Kita 1-jo, Chuo-ku, Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan 060-0001
Phone: +81-11-221-4800
email: jtb-mice@jtb.com