



Sapporo & Snow Monkeys

Discovery Tour | 11 Days | Moderate
Tokyo – Nagano – Sapporo - Kyoto

Come face to face with the mischievous Japanese Snow Monkeys in the beautiful Alps before experiencing the world's largest Ice and Snow festival at Sapporo.

- Get up close to the Japanese Snow Monkeys
- Spend a day at the Sapporo Snow Festival
- Feast on a Genghis Khan dinner
- Wander the beautiful Snow Light Path Festival
- Explore the ancient capital of Kyoto



Sapporo & Snow Monkeys tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on your itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Safe and secure with ABTA, ATOL and IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Discovery Tours:

Designed for those who wish to be further immersed in the authentic charm of Asia; our Discovery Tours include more cultural and active experiences. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience. Our Discovery tours include:

- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

Moderate Tours:

'Sapporo & Snow Monkeys' is a **moderate** tour. This means that the itinerary requires a good level of fitness.

- On several days there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time, often involving steps or uneven ground.
- Travelling in Northern Japan in February can be very cold - this tour requires warm clothing. We recommend bringing thermal layers and appropriate footwear for the snow.

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Itinerary – Sapporo & Snow Monkeys

Days 1-2: Tokyo

Meals included: Dinner

Fly overnight to Tokyo, the capital of Japan and transfer approximately 1 and a half hours to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to explore the city until an informal welcome dinner tonight. Group members arriving late in the evening may miss dinner.

Please note: Check in will usually be from 2pm. Early check in is not included today, if your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this please speak to your reservations consultant.



Destination Information

Tokyo – One of the world's most cutting edge capital cities, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit landscape, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovingly tended gardens. Although long the political and cultural centre of Japan, Tokyo became the official capital when the Meiji Emperor moved it to Tokyo in 1867.

Day 3: Tokyo

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Today you will explore the exciting city of Tokyo. The day begins with a visit to Meiji Shrine, then head across town to Asakusa, Tokyo's old town where you can soak in the atmosphere of the ancient city. Visit Sensoji, Tokyo's oldest temple and wander down Nakamise, a street that has been providing temple visitors with a variety of traditional, local snacks and tourist souvenirs for centuries. After lunch, take a boat cruise on the Sumida River passing under 12 bridges. Disembark in Hamarikyu garden, an Edo Period Japanese garden surrounded by the Shiodome district's futuristic skyscrapers, a great example of how Japan is the land of contrasts. Lastly visit the Edo-Tokyo Museum which charts the rise of Tokyo from a small fishing village called Edo through to the thriving metropolis that we see today.

Destination Information

Meiji Shrine - A shrine dedicated to the deified spirit of Emperor Meiji and a popular place for traditional Japanese weddings.

Asakusa - The centre of Tokyo's Shitamachi (Old Town) District, where you can get a glimpse of historical Tokyo.

Sensoji Temple – An ancient Buddhist Temple and the oldest in Tokyo. The temple was originally founded in the 7th century. The temple adorns an image of the Buddhist Goddess Kannon, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo.

Hamarikyu Gardens – A beautiful example of Japanese garden style which sits at the mouth of the Sumida River.

Edo-Tokyo Museum – Learn more about Tokyo's history and culture at the Edo-Tokyo Museum. The museum's permanent exhibition illustrates the Tokyo's past dating back to when it was known as Edo, including Edo Period architecture, cultural heritage, politics and more.

Day 4: Tokyo – Nagano

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Enjoy the morning at leisure in Tokyo. You will be required to check out of your room this morning at the hotel's regular time however your luggage will be stored for you until departing Tokyo this afternoon. Transfer 4 hours by coach to your hotel in the pretty mountain city of Nagano where you will stay for the next two nights.

Destination Information

Nagano – The host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics, Nagano is the main access point for the Japanese Alps. In the winter a blanket of snow covers the rural landscape you will travel through to reach this picturesque mountain city.

Day 5: Nagano

Meals included: Breakfast

Travel 1 hour to Jigokudani Yaen Koen, home of the famous Japanese Snow Monkeys, where you will walk through the forested valley. From the bus park you will walk between 25 to 35 minutes along snowy paths on an incline, to the main pool where the monkeys bathe. Warm and sturdy footwear is essential. Accustomed to humans, the monkeys can be observed from very close and almost completely ignore their human guests. The afternoon will be spent visiting the historic Zenkoji Temple, one of the most visited temples in Japan, where you will spend 1-2 hours exploring on foot.



Destination Information

Jigokudani Yaen Koen – Home to Japanese Macaques, also known as Snow Monkeys, Jigokudani literally means 'hell's valley' due to the steam and boiling water that bubbles out of small crevices in the frozen ground. It is in the baths of this boiling water that the resident Japanese Macaques like to soak. The monkeys live in large social groups, and it can be quite entertaining to watch their interactions.

Zenkoji Temple - Founded 1400 years ago, Zenkoji stores what many believe to be the first Buddhist statue ever brought to Japan. Zenkoji's main hall has a tunnel in its basement in which visitors are trying to find and touch the 'key to paradise' in complete darkness. The key is attached to the wall and grants enlightenment to anybody who touches it.

Day 6: Nagano - Sapporo

Meals included: Breakfast

Today you will travel 4 and a half hours back to Tokyo for your 90 minute flight to Sapporo. On arrival you will be transferred 1 hour to your hotel for check in and the rest of the day will be at leisure.

Destination Information

Sapporo – The capital of Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, Sapporo is known as a winter wonderland after it was introduced to the world during the Winter Olympics which were held in the city in 1972. Sapporo is also one of the nation's youngest major cities and is famous for the Snow Festival held annually in February.

Day 7: Sapporo

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today your local guide will escort you on a tour of Sapporo taking in the highlights of the city and the Snow Festival. Today's sightseeing will be both on foot and taking public transport. Private coaches are not able to travel through the city whilst the festival is in progress. The day will start with a visit to the Tower Clock, an exquisite example of Meiji architecture. You will visit Odori Avenue featuring spectacular snow and ice sculptures, following this then wander on to the nearby district of Susukino where hundreds more ice sculptures are displayed. There will be plenty of free time included for shopping. In the afternoon transfer to Sapporo Beer



Factory where you can take part in optional beer tasting (paid locally). Next door to the beer museum is Sapporo Beer Garden where the group will enjoy a Genghis Khan dinner, a Sapporo specialty of BBQ Lamb (other meats and vegetables will be available for those who do not like lamb but you must advise in advance).

Please note: You will be sightseeing on foot for around 4-5 hours today in cold conditions – make sure you wear appropriate, sturdy footwear and warm clothing as the temperature will be around -3°C.

Destination Information

The Tower Clock – The symbol of the city and the Hokkaido Prefectural Office, the Tower Clock was constructed in 1888 in the Neo-Baroque style.

Odori Avenue – At 1.5km long this is the city's main street where the festival's famous large snow sculptures, measuring more than 25 metres wide and 15 metres high are exhibited.

Susukino district – Japan's largest entertainment district north of Tokyo; during the festival you will find hundreds of ice sculptures on display here.

Sapporo Beer Factory - Sapporo Beer, one of the oldest and most popular beer brands in the country, has been brewed in Sapporo since 1877. A former brewery from that time now hosts the Sapporo Beer Museum. Optional beer tasting will incur a small fee payable locally.

Day 8: Sapporo

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

In the morning you will visit the Okurayama Viewing Point, where you'll rise by a 5 minute chair lift ride to the top of the Sapporo Winter Olympics Ski Jump and enjoy the breath taking views of the surrounding mountains. This afternoon will include a visit to the pretty port town of Otaru where you will stroll along the canal, enjoy some of Japan's best sushi and soak up the atmosphere of the Snow Light Path Festival. Otaru is approximately a 40 minute drive from Sapporo, you will travel there by public bus with your local guide and then explore the festival on foot.

Destination Information

Okurayama Viewing Point – This view point sits at the top of the 1972 Winter Olympic ski jump which is still home to many international competitions. From the top you will enjoy stunning panoramic views of Sapporo and Ishikari Bay.

Otaru – In February the Snow Light Path Festival takes place in this enchanting town. The local people create lanterns from the snow, you will experience over 100,000 candles lighting up the streets and the canal as you soak up the magical atmosphere.

Day 9: Sapporo - Kyoto

Meals included: Breakfast

This morning you will be transferred to Shin Chitose Airport where you will board a 2 hour and 20 minute flight for Osaka Airport. On arrival you will be met by a coach and taken to experience a true tea ceremony in a Kyoto tearoom before continuing on to your hotel for check in. The journey time from the airport to Kyoto will be approximately 1 and a half hours. This afternoon take part in a traditional tea ceremony.

Destination Information

Kyoto – This culturally diverse city was the ancient capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years until 1867. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

Day 10: Kyoto

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today will be spent exploring and experiencing the beauty of the Ancient Capital, Kyoto. You will be transported by private coach around the city and explore each site on foot. You will be walking for approximately 4-5 hours. Starting with the Kinkakuji Temple, known as the Golden Pavillion, one of Kyoto's most famous temples. You then will also visit Nijo Castle, an ornamental castle, take a walk down Nishiki Market Known as 'Kyoto's Kitchen' and end your sightseeing with a visit to Sanjusangendo Temple. Gather tonight for a farewell dinner at a restaurant within walking distance to your hotel.



Destination Information

Kinkakuji Temple - A Zen temple known as the Golden Pavilion as the top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf. The temple was once the retirement villa of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. This is Kyoto's most popular tourist attraction so there are often a lot of other tourists here.

Nijo Castle – Built by the founder of the Edo Shogunate as his Kyoto residence, Nijo Castle is surrounded by stunning surrounding gardens. The main building was completed in 1603, and is famous for its architecture, decorated sliding doors and 'chirping' nightingale floors.

Nishiki Market – A narrow, five block long shopping street lined by more than one hundred shops and restaurants; this lively retail market specialises in all things food related, like fresh seafood, produce, knives and cookware. It is a great place to find seasonal foods and Kyoto specialties, such as Japanese sweets, pickles, dried seafood and sushi.

Sanjusangendo - A temple which is Japan's longest wooden structure (120m), Sanjusangendo is famous for its 1001 statues of Kannon, the goddess of mercy.

Day 11: Kyoto

Meals included: Breakfast

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight. The transfer to Kansai International Airport will take approximately 90 minutes.

Please note: Late check out is not included today, if your flight arrives in the evening and you wish to arrange this please speak to your reservations consultant.

Sapporo & Snow Monkeys Travel Information

Visas

A visa is not required for UK citizens visiting Japan.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in Japan

Japanese cuisine is delicious, colourful and healthy. Meals are usually served with a bowl of rice and a bowl of miso soup and consist usually of fish, pickled vegetables and meat. Japan's other main staple is noodles, most famous being Udon and Soba. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout Japan. Food is an important element of Japanese culture. It is a time for families and friends to come together and much of family life revolves around the dinner table. Most food is eaten with chopsticks so best get practicing as cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

Breakfast will be buffet style. Lunches are mostly pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. Dinner is usually buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high quality Japanese and Western dishes. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. These are also pre-booked in advance prior to your arrival by your guides. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes. All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available.

On some days where lots of sights are covered, dinner times may be early and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing without stopping at your hotel to freshen up.

Evenings at leisure

Due to the more intrepid nature of our Discovery clients, and to give you more flexibility and choice when travelling on selected Discovery tours; we have carefully balanced special highlight meals with evenings at leisure so that you can explore the many culinary delights that Japan has to offer. Alternatively, you can use this time to enjoy the facilities of your hotel. Your National Escort will be happy to provide you with advice about good places to eat, and assist in the booking of transportation to get you there (at your own expense).

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities.

Hotels are generally rated as local three to four star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Japan.

Please note that in Japan hotel rooms and bathrooms are renowned for being small. Rooms booked for single use are usually smaller than a standard double or twin room, contain one small double bed (or one single bed), and are designed for one person to use. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Hotels in Japan often do not have porters and you will be required to carry your own luggage. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/local guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth with the rest of Asia.

Development in Japan

Japan is a developed country and as such matches the west in modernity and technological advances. Japan is an extremely safe country and takes great responsibility in maintaining high safety standards.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts. Travelling in Northern Japan in February can be very cold - this tour requires warm clothing. We recommend bringing thermal layers and appropriate footwear for the snow, as you will be visiting the mountain areas of Nagano and Sapporo in the winter season and some days the temperature can be as low minus 10° C.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Itinerary changes

It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

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