

LUXURY CYCLE WEEK

CYCLE JOURNEY FOR DISCERNING TRAVELLERS

- ☞ Cycle from 45 to 55 km per day.
- ☞ Visit the highest peak in Hokkaido, [Asahi Dake](#) (2290m).
- ☞ Ride through the superb autumn colours of central Hokkaido.
- ☞ Visit some of Japan's most famous photo and art galleries, as well as other arts and craft centres.
- ☞ Visit the mighty Taisetu and Tokachi mountain ranges with active volcanoes and fumeroles.
- ☞ Stay in [Luxury Japanese accommodation](#) each night.
- ☞ [Bilingual](#) tour leader and bicycle mechanic assistant.
- ☞ Full vehicle support which can be used any time if you want a rest.
- ☞ All coach transfers in Hokkaido to and from airports.
- ☞ No rail/bus sections. A [pure journey](#) by bicycle.

Introduction

The extraordinary contrasts of Japan are to be found throughout this archipelago but most particularly in Hokkaido. My introduction to Japan 30 years ago was this very island, and those early years exploring Hokkaido have left an indelible impression of this wild northern island.

Hokkaido is a place where the power of an ancient and pervasive culture lays like a patch work quilt over an almost sub-arctic wild land.

The result is a superb mix of culture and wilderness. Here you will find architecture and structure that reflects the history and refinement of ancient Japan. Where inner spaces comply with the Japanese aesthetic of art and beauty. And of course, delicious and healthy food as good as tha found anywhere in Japan is abundant in the mountains and valleys of Hokkaido.



Liberally spaced throughout this wild island you will also find some of Japan's most famous artisans and photographers, who have escaped north to build a life on the edge of the wilderness.

On this tour we will visit many of these artisans, including "Takushinkan", the gallery of Japan's most famous landscape photographer Shinzo Maeda. As well



Maeda San's gallery we will visit other lesser known photo galleries, painters, wood workers, potters and glass blowers. There is also the chance to visit the Ainu textile museum in Asahikawa.



The backdrop throughout is the superb alpine scenery of central Hokkaido, where mountains and volcanoes tower over the valleys. Our chosen season is autumn and Hokkaido has the very best of Japan's autumn colours.

Our accommodation throughout is the best Hokkaido has to offer. Top end Japanese luxury accommodation each night with superb meals and service and rooms. Many have relaxing hot spring baths, a soothing way to finish your day in the saddle.

We have included most costs in this tour, including a quality bike, coach transfers and alcohol with meals. You will be looked after by two staff and our group size is small, with a maximum of 12 participants. Contact us today to join this luxury cycle week in central Hokkaido.



John Morrell - Director



Tour Details 2010/11/12

2010 Sept. 18-24 2011 Sept. 17-23 2012 Sept 22-29
\$A6950 Ex Hokkaido (land Only)* Call about air fares.

Includes: Fully escorted with bilingual guide and assistant; support vehicle; 6 nights luxury Japanese accommodation twin (single option POA); 6 dinners, 6 lunches and 6 breakfasts; alcoholic beverages with meals; all coffee shops and all entry fees; quality bicycle; all private coach transfers to and from Sapporo (Chitose) or Asahikawa airports; celebratory dinner last night.

Not Included: air fares; all items of a personal nature; travel insurance (compulsory); meals other than those specified.

How to Book: Send the booking form with \$A250 deposit. All credit cards accepted. Full trip notes will then be sent which include preparation, equipment list and other details. Please note this tour is operated through AWAY WE GO TOURS LN:2TA5460 ex Australia.

TOUR OUTLINE

Please note that changes may occur in the exact route due to unforeseen circumstances. When considering this trip, please take into account distances and hill climbs so as not to be disappointed.



- Day 1. Meet group leaders on arrival at Sapporo Chitose Airport. Depart by private coach for your first night's luxury accommodation. Approximately two hours. Lunch in local restaurant en route. After arrival and check in we will set up the bikes to your requirements and you are welcome to have small ride in the vicinity of the resort at a leisurely pace. The resort has a superb spa for you to relax in prior to your gourmet dinner.
- Day 2. **Cycle 45 km/28 miles - Wooden hand crafted canoes, mountain lakes and rivers and villages.**
After a leisurely breakfast our staff will load your luggage into the support vehicle for your first full day's riding. Our ride today takes us through delightful rural villages and landscapes that feature crops not usually associated with Japan. Vast fields of carrots and onions fill the valley floors between villages. We travel past pristine mountain rivers in the shadow of steeply wooded peaks over a route that is gentle and relaxing, with no major climbs. Along the way we will make a short visit to a local wood carver who crafts superb wooden canoes. Lunch will be had in a small village en route. In the afternoon we will finish our ride along the shore of a pristine mountain lake before arriving at our luxury accommodation on the shores of the lake. Here you can again relax in the sumptuous surroundings of your accommodation, go for a walk or enjoy a spa bath before your full course dinner.
- Day 3. **Cycle 52 km/32 miles - Rolling hills, TV drama sets, glass and craft stalls, and a local winery.**
Today we continue cycling through similar terrain to yesterday. However as we head north the surrounding peaks get higher and the autumn colours begin to paint the hills with gold, yellow and red. Today we have small sharp climbs up to a kilometre in length and some gentle climbs to add some challenge to the day's riding, but as well as this we have some long gentle downhill gradients beside quietly gurgling mountain streams. Just before lunch we get our first views of the mighty Tokachi mountain range as we head into the small town of Rokugo, a famous town in Japan that was the scene for a long running television show that romanticized the life in the deep north. We will have lunch in this setting before the slow run into the town of Furano. Here we will visit local glass and wood artist's stalls, the cheese factory and winery to taste the local beverage before heading to our luxury accommodation for the night where we will once again enjoy the best Japan has to offer.
- Day 4. **Cycle 55 km/34 miles - Famous artists and photographers, coffee shops, spa baths and the mighty Tokachi mountains.**
Today, after a relaxing night on the edge of the ski ground, we cycle in the shadow of the Tokachi range as we continue over rolling valleys and the hills of Biei, made famous by world renowned photographer Shinzo Maeda. Today we visit the gallery of famous Japanese artist Goto Sumiyo and Maeda San's "Takushinkan" gallery, set amidst the beauty of the Biei hills. The cycling again is fairly gentle with some small and gentle climbs, as well as some short sharp inclines. The support vehicle can be used at any time throughout the ride. Lunch will see us visit the town of Biei. The word Biei means beautiful image, and this town set at the base of the Tokachi mountains with its imposing volcanic peaks, is just that. What's more it is a lesson in rejuvenation, as its main street is a wide lazy thoroughfare which fully encapsulates the town's name's true meaning. After lunch we head into the mountains on a gentle incline and a dedicated cycle track, stopping in coffee shops en route as we head towards the spa town of Shirogane, where again we have a night of luxury where you can finish your day soaking in a neck deep thermal pool either inside or outside in the forest.
- Day 5. **Cycle 58 km/36 miles - Rolling hill country, Hokkaido's highest peak and the beauty of Daisetsusan National Park.**
Today we roll back down the valley to Biei and take a northerly road through some valleys of traditional farming and rice growing before heading to our only major climb of the ride. Here you can use the support vehicle or challenge yourself and take on the 12 km climb to the spa village of Asahi Dake. Here the intensity of the autumn colours will leave you speechless as the snow streaked peak of Mt. Asahi (2290), or sunrise peak, Hokkaido's highest lures you ever upwards to its base. The route takes you past the spectacular towering Hokkaido Red Pine and the ghost like Silver Birch forests. Yet again the soothing waters of natural hot springs await us in your luxury accommodation. On arrival, if time permits you can catch the cable car to the base of the climb, where high alpine lakes and form an honour guard to this lofty peak. Or you can hike one of the short tracks through the forests, before returning to your night of luxury in our specially chosen accommodation.
- Day 6. **Cycle 45 km/ 28 miles - Long descents, Hokkaido's most northerly city, potters, glass artists and Ainu textiles.**
After a leisurely breakfast and a morning hike to the base of the mountain we have a relaxing two and a half hour cycle for our last morning's ride. This last ride is all downhill or flat and is a relaxing way to finish our "Tour De Hokkaido". En route we will stop at a photo gallery set in an old rice warehouse and a wood worker whose craft is famous in Hokkaido. As we approach the city of Asahikawa you are welcome to get in the support vehicle for our final few kilometres to our luxury hotel set on a hilltop overlooking Japan's most northerly city. After a delicious lunch we will tour the attractions of Asahikawa, including famous potters, glass artists and the Ainu textile museum on the edge of town. We will finish our tour with a celebratory in the main city, where we will sample the best seafood this island has to offer, followed by some local rice wine or Sake.
- Day 7. After our last breakfast together we depart by private coach for Chitose or Asahikawa airports for your return flights. Chitose airport is approximately 3 hours while Asahikawa airport is approximately 1 hour.

AIR FARES AND FLIGHT SCHEDULES

We encourage you to contact us to help arrange or advise the very best flight arrangements when joining this ride, so as to ensure comfortable and hassle free connections.