

SELF GUIDED CYCLE HOKKAIDO

A RELAXING CYCLE JOURNEY THROUGH CENTRAL HOKKAIDO

- ☞ Cycle from 45 to 55 km per day.
- ☞ Visit the highest peak in Hokkaido, [Asahi Dake](#) (2290m).
- ☞ Ride at your own pace and choose your own tour dates during the season from 1 June to 10 October.
- ☞ 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 fumaroles.
- ☞ Stay most nights in traditional inns, some with superb hot spring baths .
- ☞ Choose our baggage delivery service or take your panniers.
- ☞ Choose our mid range bicycle hire or take your own bike.
- ☞ Meet and greet on arrival and back up service optional.
- ☞ Comprehensive self guiding notes.

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 that 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 self guided tour, using our comprehensive guiding notes, you can visit many of these artisans, including "Takushinkan" the gallery of Japan's most famous landscape photographer Shinzo Maeda. As well as Maeda San's gallery you can 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.

Your accommodation is predominantly Japanese style. Delicious and healthy Japanese meals are a feature of our accommodations. Many have relaxing hot spring baths, a soothing way to finish your day in the saddle.

Contact us today to get the ball rolling on your own independent week of cycling in Hokkaido Japan.



John Morrell - Director



Tour Details 2010/11

Any date that suits you. Season is 1 June to 10 October each year.
\$A1990 Ex Hokkaido (land Only)* Call about air fares.

Includes: 6 nights accommodation twin (single option POA); 6 dinners and 6 breakfasts; meet and greet on arrival day 1; comprehensive self guiding notes; daily baggage transfer service (minimum of two full paying cyclists);

Contact us if you don't need baggage delivery service.

Not Included: air fares; all items of a personal nature; tour leader; support vehicle; transfers; travel insurance (compulsory); bicycles (bicycle hire for this tour is \$A265 including back up mechanical service) 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 the following itinerary is the suggested itinerary to get the most from your self guided cycle tour and may change depending on your own personal preference and skills. Your comprehensive self guided tour notes will give details on how to follow this itinerary.



- Day 1. Meet group leader on arrival at Sapporo Chitose Airport. Depart by private coach for your first nights 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 Inn at a leisurely pace.
- Day 2. **Cycle 45 km/28 miles - Wooden hand crafted canoes, mountain lakes and rivers and villages.**
After a leisurely breakfast we head off for our 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 inn on the shores of the lake. Here you can go for a walk or enjoy a thermal bath before 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 pension accommodation for the night.
- 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 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 accommodation, a unique and private wooden lodge, famous for its healthy and delicious food. 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 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 mornings 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 Japanese inn in the centre Japan's most northerly city. After lunch we will tour the attractions of Asahikawa, including famous potters, glass artists and the Ainu textile museum on the edge of town.
- Day 7. After our last breakfast together we depart by 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.