

The Ice Horizon and Drift Ice Walk—A Glimpse into the Ecosystem Created by the Currents of East Hokkaido



You will experience the harsh nature of East Hokkaido and the rich ecosystem created by ocean currents and drift ice in this tour.

In the Kiritappu area, you will visit the habitat of sea otters, which are rare in Japan. And you can experience the 'Ice Horizon' by walking on snowshoes in the ice and snow field created by the Notsuke Peninsula, the largest sand spit in Japan.

The drift ice cruise from Rausu, the drift ice walk in Utoro, hiking around the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center, and the seafood at the various restaurants will give you a strong sense of the diversity of the ecosystem brought about by the ocean currents and drift ice.



Highlights:

- Bird watching in the Kiritappu Marshland area and observing sea otters at Cape Kiritappu
- Ice Horizon Walk in the ice and snow field created by Notsuke Peninsula, the largest sand spit in Japan
- Observing drift ice and large birds of prey on a cruise from Rausu
- Taking a Drift Ice Walk to experience the drift ice on the shore
- Taking an untethered hot-air balloon flight to get a bird's-eye view of the East Hokkaido landscape and the Sea of Okhotsk

Location:

Kushiro area, Nemuro area , Okhotsk area of Hakkaido, Kiritappu Marshland, Cape Kiritappu, Notsuke Peninsula, Rausu, Cape Shiretoko, Utoro, Koshimizu

Main Activity:

The Ice Horizon Walk, The drift ice cruise, Walking on drift ice

Difficulty:

2 Easy

Tour Dates:

Early February to Early March

Pax:

Minimum 8

Maximum 14

Price:

JPY 286,000. ~

[Route map](#)

[Day-by-day Itinerary](#)

[What's included](#)

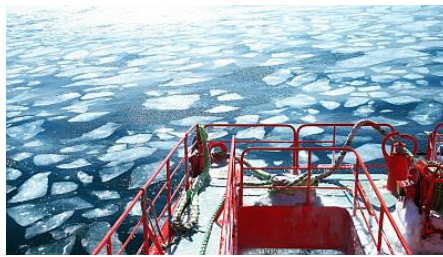
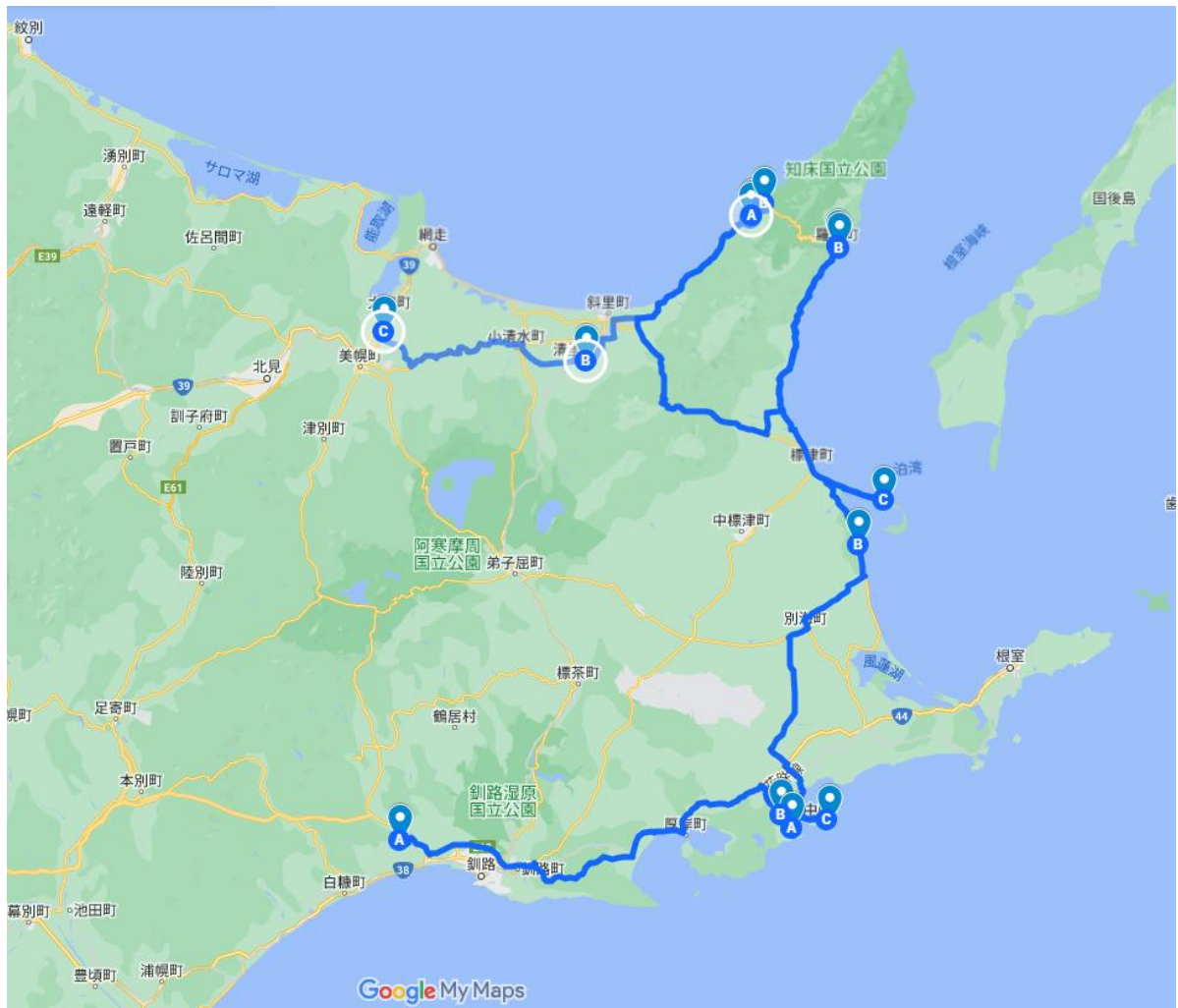
[We provide & What to bring](#)

[About us](#)

[Information and Requirements](#)

[Reservation & Cancellation policy](#)

Route map



Day-by-day Itinerary

Day 1 –Birdwatching in Kiritappu Wetland, observing wild sea otters at Cape Kiritappu

We will gather at Kushiro Airport and head to Kiritappu Wetland by private car. There we will enjoy a great view of Kiritappu Wetland from Biwase Observatory. We will spend our time bird watching at Oku-Biwase Wild Bird Park (approx. 30 min.), after which we will visit Kiritappu Wetland Center and walk along the nearby Yachibozu Boardwalk Trail (approx. 1 hour on foot).

We will make a stop at Cape Kiritappu and observe sea otters in the wild. Sea otters are able to inhabit the area because of the abundance of marine life brought by the ocean currents. We will take a private car to a pension in Kiritappu.

Dinner

Pension Porch, where you will stay overnight, is a cozy inn for private use. Here we will enjoy a meal prepared with local ingredients.

Activity: Birdwatching, Observing sea otters

Difficulty: 2 Easy

Day 2 –Ice Horizon Walk on Notsuke Peninsula, the largest sand spit in Japan

Our day will begin with a private car to Odaito (approx. 1 hour).

We will drop by Roadside Station Odaito and have lunch at Odaito Fishing Harbor.

In the afternoon, we will visit Notsuke Peninsula, a coastal landform created by powerful ocean currents and the largest sand spit in Japan. In winter the shallow sea in this area is transformed into a field of ice and snow, known as ‘Salar de Uyuni of Japan’. Here we will walk along an expanse of ice and snow, seemingly extending over the horizon. We will explore this unique seasonal offering of the region (approx. 2 hours).

We will return to Rausu by private car.

Morning / Lunch / Dinner

Breakfast: Japanese style set menu

Lunch: We will stop at Roadside Station Odaito and enjoy seafood around the Odaito Fishing Harbor.

Dinner : Japanese-style course meals featuring local ingredients and seafood

Activity: The Ice Horizon Walk

Difficulty: 2 Easy

Day 3 – Experience drift ice, a natural phenomenon created by ocean currents, by cruise and on foot

We will take a drift ice cruise from Rausu (organized by Shiretoko Nature Cruise). We will have a high chance of seeing drift ice in the Nemuro Straits as well as large birds of prey such as steller's sea eagles and white-tailed sea eagles (approx. 2 hours).

Next we will transfer by private car to Utoro (approx. 2 hours). In Utoro, we will go on a 'drift ice walk' with a professional guide from Shiretoko Guided Cruise Shinra (approx. 1.5 hours). Here we can actually set foot on the drift ice at sunset. Drift ice, carried by ocean currents, is one of the world's rarest natural phenomena.

The presence of large raptors such as white-tailed and steller's sea eagles is a sign that the currents that bring drift ice also bring rich blooms of plankton, which is the foundation of the marine food chain. Walking on the drift ice on the shore will further deepen the experience.

Morning / Lunch / Dinner

Breakfast: Japanese style set menu

Lunch : Local restaurant serving mainly dishes made with local ingredients. Customers can choose from a menu

Dinner: We will enjoy dinner at the Kitakobushi Shiretoko Hotel & Resort in Utoro, featuring local ingredients such as venison.

Activity: The drift ice cruise, drift ice walk

Difficulty: 2 Easy

Day 4 – Snowshoeing and wildlife watching around Shiretoko Nature Center

We will take a private car to the Shiretoko Nature Center and learn about the nature of Shiretoko from a Shiretoko Nature Foundation certified guide. This will be followed by snowshoeing along animal trails in a pristine forest (approx. 3 hours). The rich natural environments, both land and sea, in Shiretoko will allow us to see a wide variety of wildlife in the area. The accompanying guide will provide explanations for a more in-depth experience of nature.

After lunch at the Shiretoko Nature Center, we will take a winter wildlife watching tour accompanied by a Shiretoko Foundation guide (approx. 1.5 hours).

To end the day, we will stay overnight in Utoro at the same hotel as the previous day.

Morning / Lunch / Dinner

Breakfast: Japanese style set menu

Lunch : Local restaurant Customers can choose from a menu

Dinner: Luxurious buffet with local ingredients

Activity: Snowshoeing, Observing wild animals

Difficulty: 2 Easy

Day 5 – Hot air balloon flight to view East Hokkaido from the sky and reflect on our trip

We will transfer by private car to Kiyosato Ihatov Hostel (approx. 1 hour). There we will take an untethered hot air balloon flight operated by Shiretoko Tourist (approx. 2 hours), affording us a bird's-eye view of the land of East Hokkaido and the drift ice in the Sea of Okhotsk. We will look back and reflect on the richness of nature and ecosystems we experienced during the previous four days.

Finally, we will transfer by private car to Memanbetsu Airport (approx. 1 hour) and conclude our tour.

Morning / Lunch

Breakfast: Buffet style

Lunch : Local restaurant serving mainly dishes made with local ingredients. Customers can choose from a menu

Activity: Untethered hot air balloon flight

Difficulty: 2 Easy

Accommodations :

Day1 : Kiritappu Japanese Ryokan style

Day2 : Rausu Japanese Ryokan style

Day3 : Utoro Japanese Ryokan style

Day4 : Utoro

What's included

- Accommodation as per itinerary in a double / twin bed room. Single supplement applies for the single room accommodation.
- Transportation as per itinerary.
- English speaking licensed guide throughout the whole tour.
- Meals as listed in the itinerary.
- Program Participation Fee as per itinerary.

We provide & What to bring

We provide

- Snowshoes and poles are available free of charge
- Dry suits for the Drift Ice Walk are available free of charge

What to bring

A list of equipment necessary for climbing Mt. Me-akan in winter will be made and distributed in advance for participants to prepare. The list may include the following:

Hiking boots for 3-seasons or severe winter conditions

Mountaineering backpack

Outerwear, middle wear, underwear (top and bottom for each)

Gloves, over-gloves

Warm clothing (sweaters, fleece, down jackets, etc.)

Socks for mountaineering

Long spats (gaiters)

Sunglasses, goggles

Cap, beanie, balaclava

Headlamp

Compass, map

Toilet paper

Personal medical supplies

Sunscreen

Water bottle (insulated bottle)

Health insurance card

Plastic bag

Trail foods, snacks

About us

Alpine Tour Service is the tour company in Japan, specialized in the adventure trips which feature hiking, trekking & birding all over the world. We are the one of the oldest tour companies in Japan with more than fifty years of history.

Guides

- Tour leader: Certified English speaking mountain guide as well as a tour leader.
Japan Mountain Guides Association (JAMG)
Mountain Guides Stage 1
certified first aid
- Local Hiking Guide: Certified guide, certified first aid.

Information and Requirements

Dietary Restrictions

All meals will also offer a vegetarian menus.

Emergency Response Plan

A first-aid kit will be carried by your tour leader and hiking guide at all times. All those tour leader and hiking guide have finished authorized first-aid course. A support car accompanies throughout the cycling activity. In case of major injuries, contact Fire and Disaster Management and transport to the nearest medical facility.

Reservation & Cancellation Policy

Payment Methods

Credit card (VISA MASTER)

Cancellation

Deposit

To secure your itinerary we require an initial non-refundable deposit as a booking confirmation fee.

Deposit amount and conditions will be confirmed case by case at the time of travel planning and quoting.

Deposit will be treated as part of the planning fee, tour fee, cancellation fee or penalty fee.

Payment

Payment of the travel invoice is due no later than 60 days prior to commencement of travel. When settling

the travel invoice, the payment will be reduced by the amount of the deposit.

Where a booking is made within 60 days of commencement of travel, the total trip cost is required at the

time of booking. A travel invoice will be issued and will be immediately payable.

Disclaimer

Organizers reserve the right to cancel or change the itinerary of the tour at their own discretion.

Organizers are not responsible for compensating any additional costs that may result from any changes.

Tour Operator / Contact

ALPINE TOUR SERVICE CO., LTD.

Yashima Bldg.2F, 420-3 Dainichi, Yotsukaido-shi, Chiba 284-0001 Japan

/ Hirofumi Kobayashi TEL. 043 290 9699 EMAIL. kobayashi@alpine-tour.com