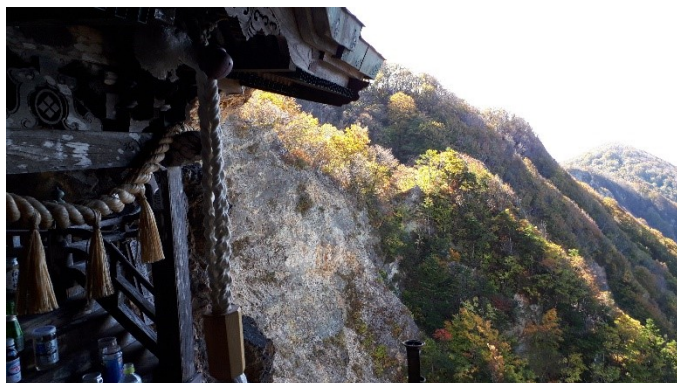


A trekking tour in the southern part of Hokkaido offering an immersive cultural experience that delves into the rich history of the Kitamae-bune



From the Edo period through the Meiji period, the impressive “Kitamae-bune” network of ships formed a trading system that provided a vital connection between Hokkaido and the main island of Honshu. While daily necessities such as rice arrived from other parts of Japan, the region’s precious products such as fertilizer made of herring, dried salmon, sea cucumber, and abalone were shipped to Honshu.

This tour focuses on Esashi-cho, the most important trading base for Kitamae-bune ships in southern Hokkaido, which flourished in the 17th century, and provides an intriguing experience of its special nature, history, and culture, including the traditional Ubagami Daijingu Togyo festival, which was of great importance to our predecessors who had to survive in this harsh climate and environment .

While trekking to Ota Shrine, which is believed to enshrine the god of voyages and is located on a steep mountainside, you will be able to experience interacting with the people involved in the festival and learn about the history of the people who lived in this place.

Highlights

- Learn Esashi Oiwake, folk songs of this region with unique traditions
- Interact with local residents by cooking a local meal ensemble for fishermen
- Visit the Ota Shrine located on a harsh mountainside in Setana-town

Location

Hokkaido is an island located in the northern part of Japan. For a long time, the island has been home to the Ainu indigenous people and has a long history of interaction with the

Japanese and other northern peoples. This second largest island in Japan has relatively well-preserved nature, a perfect place for outdoor activities.

In this tour, we will visit the Esashi-cho and Setana-cho located in the southern part of Hokkaido. It was relatively warm and was a place of trade between Ainu people and Wajin (Japanese people from Honshu and other areas).

Therefore, it is an area with a very unique history and culture.

Main Activity

Trek to Ota Shrine on a sacred pilgrimage, famous as the world's most harshly located shrine.

Difficulty

3

Tour Dates

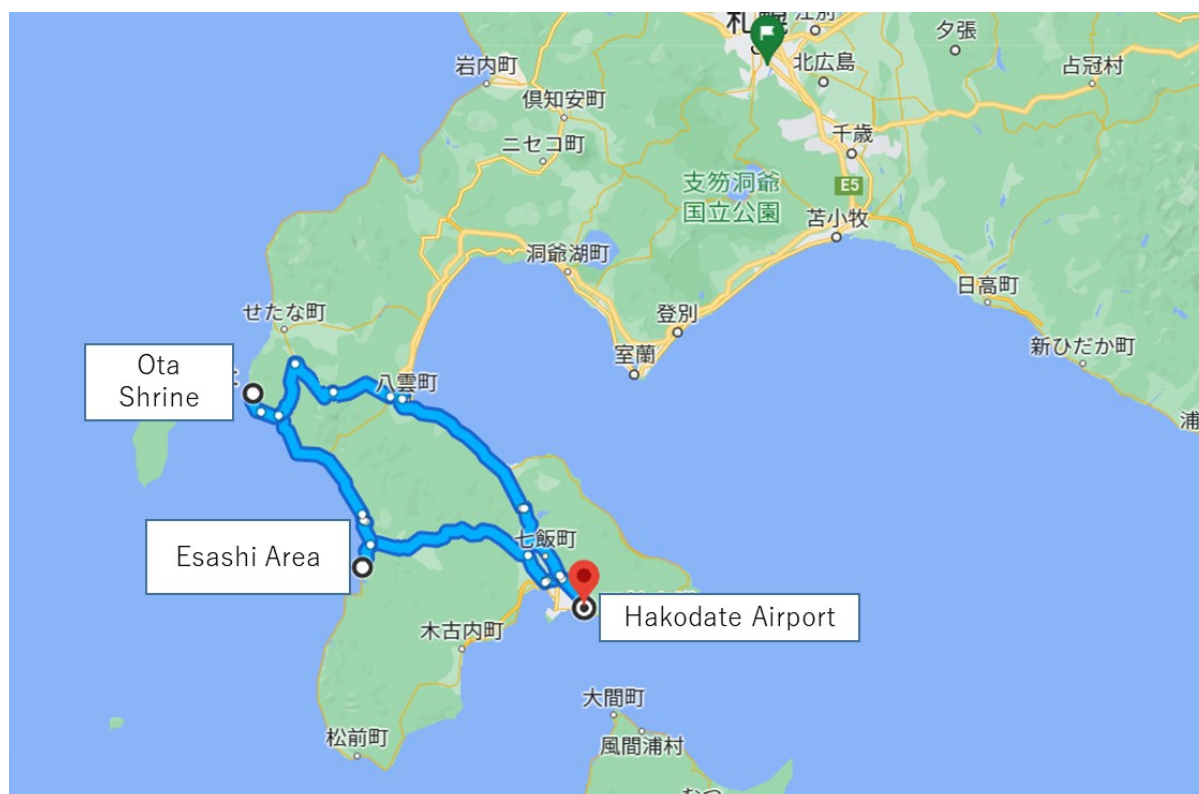
2 Day itinerary. Available from late May to early October

Pax

Minimum 4. Maximum 16

Price

JPY 80,000-



Day-by-day Itinerary

Day-1

After meeting and greeting at Hakodate Airport or Hakodate Station, move to Esashi Town by chartered bus.

An English-speaking guide will explain the tour itinerary, concept and historical background on the way. Summarized as below:

After the samurai era, Esashi Town prospered as an important port of departure and arrival for Kitamae-bune. It was bustling with herring fishing, and the performing arts culture of the common people flourished. As a memory of the prosperity of that era, there is a fishery ship control center called "Kaisen Tonya" in the city designated as an important cultural heritage of Japan.

Lunch

With the local 'OKASAN/mothers', experience making a unique meal for the fishermen of this region and eating it together for lunch.

Exploring the town

Explore the town with local guides, who will introduce the history of regional forestry and fisheries, Kitamae-bune, and traditional performing arts culture.

Observing a demonstration of Esashi Oiwake

Visit the 'Esashi Dojo' and watch a performance by an Esashi Oiwake master, who will showcase one of the most famous folk songs in Japan. You can also learn some of the essence of this beautiful art form.

Dinner

Local BBQ at Kamome island.

This beautiful island was designated part of the Hiyama Prefectural Natural Park, and was once the source of the prosperity of Esashi, which was the stage for herring fishing and the Kitamaebune trade. In the 1980s, the shape changed to the tombolo, which is a geographical formation that connects an island to the mainland with a narrow strip of land.

After dinner, check in to Hotel New Esashi.

Accommodation

Hotel New Esashi / Western Style Hotel / Private room

Activity

Walking, Cooking

Accommodation

Hotel New Esashi / Western Style Hotel / Private room

Included meal

Lunch, Dinner

Difficulty

1/5

Day-2

After breakfast at the hotel, move to Setana town by chartered coach. From this town, trek to Ota Shrine, which is associated with Lord Nobuhiro Takeda, the founder of the Matsumae clan. To get here, it is necessary to walk up a fairly steep mountain road.

We will visit Ota Shrine under the guidance of the chief priest. The elevation of Mt. Ota is 483m, and the elevation of the main shrine is 333m. The one-way trek to the main shrine takes about 90 minutes. Special devotions will be held at the main shrine.

This shrine is said to have been given the title of Ota Daigongen when Nobuhiro Takeda, the founder of the Matsumae clan, landed in this small village. Since then, it has been worshiped as a place where one can obtain safe navigation and protection of the spiritually powerful deities.

Lunch

After trekking for a unique visit to a shrine, we will have a takeaway lunch at Risshozan Park in Setana town.

Local burgers will be delivered from downtown restaurants. Please note that we are unfortunately unable to accommodate requests for specific allergies.

Optional settings are available. If trekking to Ota Shrine is not for you, you can select alternative activities such as gold panning.

After lunch time, we will return to Hakodate JR station or Hakodate airport depending on the case.

Activity

trekking

Included meal

Breakfast, Lunch

Difficulty

3/5

What's included

- 1 breakfast, 2 lunches, 1 dinner
- 1 night accommodation
- Making local seafood meal experience
- Regional folk song learning
- Trekking to the shrine
- All transport as described in the itinerary
- Snacks and refreshments
- English speaking Japanese guide(s)

Not included

- Airfares
- Personal expenses
- Alcoholic drinks with included meals

What we provide and What to bring

We provide

- First-aid kit
- Safety equipment and maps

What to bring

Essentials

- Waterproof jacket and wind breaker
- Mid- to high-cut hiking boots
- Sun hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses
- Water bottle
- Quick-dry hand towel
- backpack with enough space to carry all the above
- Personal medications
- Travel insurance
- Passport
- Cash in Japanese yen, especially a small amount of cash will be needed as a donation to the shrine

Recommended items

- Cell phone power bank
- Extra snacks which you're used to eating while trekking and walking
- Camera

About us

Tobu Top Tours

Awareness of environmentally friendly action and the protection of our precious nature has always been at the core of our corporate philosophy. We feel that we need to do more than our obligations to ensure that our business and participants have a positive impact on the community. Our important goal is also to encourage guests to spend more time in Hokkaido's natural environment, protecting the natural environment and taking action to respect the indigenous culture.

Guides

■ English through guide Toru Takizawa

Qualification: RAJ River Guide Registration number NO: 000273

As a long term guide for foreign visitors in Japan, he is based in Niseko and has an depth knowledge of the history of both Wajin (Japanese who came from Honshu and other places) and the Ainu indigenous people, and the ability to objectively convey the historical facts of Hokkaido, respectfully and sensitively to both guests and residents.

■ Pirika Nature School Yoshihiro Ishikawa

Qualifications: RAJ River Guide Registration number NO: 000275

A unique person with two aspects, who works as a manager of an outdoor company and as the chief priest of Ota Shrine, one of the world's most harshly located shrines. While working hard to maintain Ota Shrine, he also established the Pirika Nature School to let people know about the charm of the great nature of Setana and Imakane, where many people can enjoy and experience nature through their programmes.

Information and Requirements

Dietary Restrictions

We believe that eating like the locals is the best way of experiencing Hokkaido's unique culture. However, we understand that it's not possible for everyone to do this and we're more than happy to cater for food allergies, dietary restrictions and special requirements. If you have any dietary restrictions or preferences, please tell us in the registration form at the time of booking, and we will do our best to accommodate them.

Especially in the local area of Hokkaido, there is a unique and attractive food culture. However, over its long history, the inhabitants of many areas, for example, have often not encountered different types of vegetarian or religious diets. Therefore, please make sure to inform us of any possible dietary requirements or preferences before departure.

Unfortunately, if a sudden request for dietary restrictions, or particular ingredients or cooking methods is made at the site, there may be cases where we cannot accommodate them, whether it is an allergy, a personal policy, or for religious reasons.

In addition, please understand that depending on the situation, it may be difficult to respond to cases where you want to change because you cannot eat the ingredients unique to the region. In that case, we may reply with an individual response, which may incur an additional fee depending on the case. We will investigate and prepare in advance according to the information on the registration form before heading to the area. We thank you for your cooperation.

Emergency Response Plan

We require our guides to be certified as Advanced First-Aid Responders or Wilderness First-Aiders. If a local guide or activity guide concentrates on that particular activity and is not licensed to provide first aid, the tour operator can deploy a licensed person as an assistant to be able to deal with emergency cases without delay.

At all times, our guides always complete and carry a first-aid kit.

An emergency flow chart is also provided.

Occurrence of an emergency ⇒ Initial response (first aid provided by a licensed guide/contacting the fire department, which is the responsible agency for ambulances in Japan) ⇒ Transportation to hospital ⇒ Contacting family members ⇒ Follow-up after transportation (progress confirmation, insurance correspondence / compensation confirmation)

Emergency hospitals in each town in the region

Esashi: Hokkaido Esashi Hospital

Setana: Setana Town National Health Insurance Hospital

Reservation and Cancellation Policy

Payment methods

Cancellation

Disclaimer

- ◆ Participants should ensure that they follow the guide's instructions during the tour.
- ◆ The organizer will take out the following insurance for the participants.

The organizer is not responsible for any injury, illness, loss or other accidents, except for first aid.

Death / residual disability: 15 million yen

Hospitalization fee 180 days or more of hospitalization: 200,000 yen

Hospitalization days 90 days or more and less than 180 days: 100,000 yen

Hospitalization days: 7 days or more and less than 90 days: 50,000 yen

Hospitalization days less than 7 days: 20,000 yen

Outpatient visit fee 90 days or more: 50,000 yen

Number of hospital visits: 7 days or more and less than 90 days: 25,000 yen

Number of hospital visits: 3 days or more and less than 7 days: 10,000 yen

Exemption from liability within 2 days

Personal / objective common insurance amount: 100 million yen (deductible amount: 1000 yen)

In the event of any accident, we cannot guarantee more than the above insurance limit.

Participants are responsible for their own health care, such as getting a doctor's diagnosis in advance.

◆ If the tour is canceled by the day before due to rain, etc., participants will be refunded.

However, please note that no refund will be given after the tour commences.

◆ The decision as to whether the tour can be held in bad weather will be made by the organizer.

Partner Company

◆ Hokkaido Esashi Mirai Tourism Organization (DMO)

<https://dmo.esashi.town/>

◆ Pirika Nature School

<http://pirikashizenjyuku.web.fc2.com/>

Tour operator contact information

Tobu Top Tours Sapporo Branch Toru Tanaka

〒060-0051 7th floor, Park East Sapporo, 1-3, Minami 1 Johigashi, Chuo-ku, Sapporo, Hokkaido tel 011-221-0821 fax 011-222-4357 Mobile 080-2195-1819