

Ainu herbs: Finding Ainu's knowledge in our culture and cuisine in Sapporo



The Ainu people lived in the harsh natural environment of northern Japan. Their diet was supported by the rich nature of Hokkaido. The Ainu people, who respected and utilized plants and animals, used hundreds of plants for food and medicine, some of which are still used today as herbs.

You will learn about their history and lifestyle at Ainu Culture Promotion Center (Sapporo Pirka Kotan), and experience their dietary habits through explanations by herbalists and cooking using Ainu herbs.

Highlights:

- Gaining insight into Ainu culture at Ainu Culture Promotion Center (Sapporo Pirka Kotan)
- Cooking experience using Ainu herbs
- Commentary on Ainu herbs by the herbal specialist which hold at the Botanic Garden, Hokkaido University

Location:

Hokkaido Prefecture is the northernmost island and the largest prefecture in Japan, with an area of 83,450 square km (32,2220 square mi) and a population of 5.2 million. Hokkaido is known for its natural hot springs (onsen), volcanos and ski resorts. With the large area, many of its land are left unspoiled, which allows us to preserve and enjoy its natural beauty. Hokkaido is home to a Natural World Heritage Site, a Ramsar Convention Wetland and several national parks. Each time you visit, you will experience a new side of Hokkaido.

Sapporo is the capital of Hokkaido with a population of 1.96 million, which is the 4th largest population in Japan. Sapporo has two components of "city" and "nature" in one place. In summer, the humidity is lower than other areas of Japan and people enjoy cooler summer. In winter, the average annual snowfall in Sapporo is 500 cm. The harmony of city and nature is the beauty of Sapporo.

Ainu Culture Promotion Center (Sapporo Pirka Kotan)

Sapporo Pilika-kotan means "Beautiful Village of Sapporo" in the Ainu language. This facility recreates the *chise* (house), *hepereset* (bear cage), and *pu* (storehouse) of the Ainu people as they lived in the past. In the exhibition room, about 300 items of traditional Ainu clothing and tools are displayed. Visitors can enjoy learning and deepening their understanding of the life, history, and culture of the Ainu people.

Botanic Garden, Hokkaido University

Hokkaido University Botanical Garden, located about a 10-minute walk from Sapporo Station, is the second oldest botanical garden in Japan, having opened in 1886. The 13.3-hectare site is home to approximately 4,000 species of plants, including alpine plants and other plants native to Hokkaido. Visitors can also view valuable materials related to the development of Hokkaido and the life and culture of the indigenous people at the museum and the Northern Peoples' Reference Room.

Main Activity:	Cultural experience and communication with local residents	
Difficulty:	1	
Tour Dates:	Late May to mid-October (Except Mondays, Tour will not be held when Botanic Garden, Hokkaido University is closed.)	
Pax:	Minimum 2	Maximum 8
Price:	JPY 60,000 per person (in case of 8 participants)	

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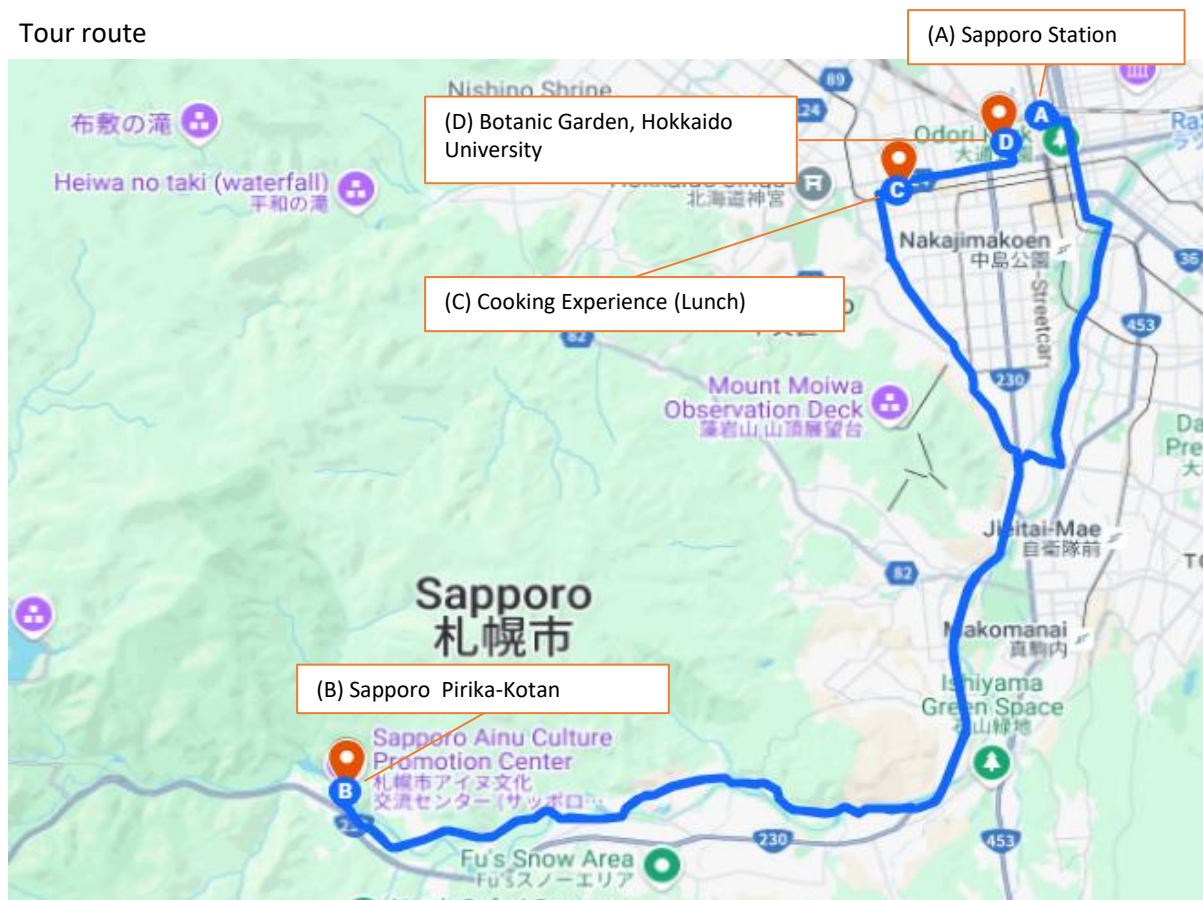
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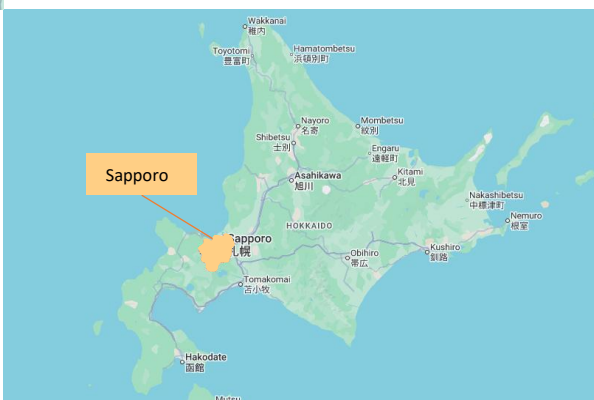
Route map

Tour route



Location of Sapporo

Map of Hokkaido



Source: Google My Maps

Day-by-day Itinerary

Day 1 – Day tour in Sapporo

Participants meet at Sapporo station at 8:30 am. The through guide is waiting for you at the meeting point. Once everyone arrives, the group have a quick briefing to get to know each other and go over the itinerary. After that, the group board a private car and head to Ainu Culture Promotion Center (Sapporo Pirka Kotan). The through guide will give the explanation about Ainu culture.

After learning Ainu culture, the group head to the cooking studio for cooking experience. The herb specialist meet the group there and give lecture and cook together for lunch using Ainu herbs and locally grown ingredients.

After enjoying the lunch, the group head to the Botanical Garden, Hokkaido University, where the herb specialist give the group more detailed explanation about Ainu herbs. It will help the group to have a deeper insight of Ainu knowledge about how the Ainu people incorporated wild plants (herbs) into their diet and how we can incorporate them into our current diet.

After learning the Ainu herbs at the Botanic Garden, the group head back to the Sapporo station and say farewell to the guide and other group members.

Lunch Salmon and wild vegetables soup (Ohau style or Kina Ohau for vegetarians)
Rice with inakibi
Ezo deer hamburger steak with fruit of Amur Corktree (chitatapu style, or pumpkin rata sikhepu for vegetarians)
Yomogi dumplings with kelp sauce (Kopsito style)
Herb tea with eggplant and ento (crested latesummer mint)
*Menu may change depending on the season.



What's included

- All of transportation as stated in the itinerary
- A through guide (English speaking)
- A Herb specialist
- Lunch
- Admission for Botanic Garden, Hokkaido University

What's not included

- Transfer between your accommodation and Sapporo Station before/after the tour
- Personal expense
- Any extra cost for drinks other than those provided within the tour

We provide & What to bring

We provide

- Cooking utensils, ingredients

What to bring

Necessities

- Comfortable shoes for walking (may walk on the gravel, unpaved road)
- Dispensable clothes
- Windproof (or water proof) jacket and pants for cold weather
- Cap/hat/ sun umbrella to prevent the heatstroke
- Drinks during the tour

Good to have

- Camera to record your experience and extra battery
- Pouch or a small bag pack to bring your valuables and belongings
- Umbrella or rain jacket and pants (tour will held even it is a rainy day)
- Sunglasses

About us

Nippon Travel Agency Hokkaido

We, **Nippon Travel Agency Hokkaido (NTA Hokkaido)** launched business in 1994, spinning off from “Nippon Travel Agency (NTA)”, the first travel agency in Japan founded in 1905.



This spin-off helped us become a specialist in all types of travel in Hokkaido, the largest prefecture in Japan, ranging from Destination Management, Outgoing Tourism, MICE Solutions to Special Interest Tours. We extended our business from the Sapporo office to 8 branch offices within Hokkaido, from Hakodate of southern Hokkaido to Kushiro of eastern Hokkaido. From our 115+ years of experience in the travel market, we are committed to offering travel services of the highest quality, combining our energy and enthusiasm. Our greatest satisfaction come in serving large numbers of satisfied clients who have experienced the joys and inspiration of travel. If you have any questions or concerns about a trip to Japan, please feel free to contact us. Our mission is to provide the best experience on your next exciting trip to Japan!

Kahoru Ohsumi / Herb specialist @BOTANICAL Co., Ltd.

Born in Hokkaido and currently living in Sapporo. As a specialist in herbs and aromatic plants, she is involved in a wide range of activities, including helping promote Hokkaido foods outside Hokkaido and publishing recipes in Hokkaido newspapers. She has also been giving lectures and writing about food and appearing on TV, radio, and other media based on her many years of experience in running cooking classes. Currently, she is involved in a wide range of activities, including supporting the promotion of Hokkaido foodstuffs outside of Hokkaido and publishing recipes in Hokkaido newspapers.



Certifications:

- Herb specialist
- Culinary expert
- Vegetable Sommelier Professional Certified (by the Japan Vegetable Sommelier Association)

Chie Moue / Through guide

The guide, Chie Moue was born in Fukushima Prefecture and now live in Sapporo. After working in the forestry industry for the Hokkaido Regional Forestry Office, she studied English teaching in Australia. After working as a teacher at an English school and as an English-speaking nature guide in Shiretoko, she is currently working as a national government-licensed tour guide interpreter and as an English hospitality teacher. She is certified as a Hokkaido Adventure Travel Through Guide and offers advice for incoming tours and gives lectures about the forest.



Certification/Licenses

- National Government Licensed Guide Interpreter (English)
- Forest Instructor
- Certified Hokkaido Adventure Travel Guide (Through Guide)
- Wilderness Advanced First Aid
- Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor
- EIKEN Test in Practical English Proficiency (Grade 1)
- Elementary School English Teaching License (J-SHINE)
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Information and Requirements

Dietary Restrictions

Should you have any dietary restrictions or any special requests, please let us know at the time of booking. We will work our best to match your request, but there may be time where we have to ask for your forgiveness if we cannot fulfill a request. In our years of working with overseas groups, we have been requested for Halal, gluten free and MSG free. We ask that you let us know especially for these three restrictions, as many of Japanese dish uses gluten and MSG. Halal is not penetrated much yet in Japan, especially in the countryside.

Our most desire is for you to experience Japan to the fullest, not just through activities and communicating with the locals but through food as well. As we stated above, in certain areas, especially in the countryside of Japan, it may be difficult to completely match your request. So, we would like to ask for you to try your best in challenging the local specialties. On the other hand, we strongly understand that dietary restrictions are very important and we so will try our best to meet your request. But we may need some time to arrange the meal for you so please let us know at the earliest.

Emergency Response Plan

We believe that in order to enjoy any kind of tour, we must first think of safety as the top priority. We, Nippon Travel Agency Hokkaido, ask for all activity guides to be certified with the Advanced First Aid Course or any certificate of similar course (for example wilderness first aid). Other than just being certified, the guides will have a first aid kit along with them during the tour. We will also have a staff in our office to take care of any kind of trouble that may happen during the tour.

Depending on the weather conditions of that day, the guide will be giving out specific instructions to prevent any danger that may occur because of the weather condition. If the weather is unsuitable to fulfill an activity, the guide will make a decision to change the routing. In the worst case scenario, we will substitute the activity with a different activity just as enjoyable as the original activity.

Reservation & Cancellation Policy

Reservation and Payment Methods

After receiving your reservation request, we will send you an email with the necessary reservation forms. Please fill in the forms and send it back to us by email. Personal questions regarding dietary restrictions, height, weight etc. are solely used to provide you with the best service, activities, and meals.

We accept payment by wire or credit card. If you wish to pay by credit card, please be noted that we only accept VISA or Master. Any other type of credit card company, we are afraid we can not accept them. If you wish to pay through our bank, please let us know on the reservation form, and we will send you our banking information.

We will require a deposit of JPY 50,000- or Full Payment at the time of completing your reservation form. Your deposit will be applied to the total tour fare of this tour. Final payments must be made 21 days prior your tour date. We will send you a reminder email regarding payment approximately 30 days before your tour starts.

Cancellation

If you wish to cancel your reservation, please let us know by email with a writing that you are cancelling the tour. Please see below for our Cancellation Charge.

Cancellation Notice is Received on:	Cancellation Charge
31 days or Before prior tour starts date in Japan	No charge
30 to 15 days prior to tour start date in Japan	20% of total tour fare
14 to 8 days prior to tour start date in Japan	50% of total tour fare
7 to 5 days prior to tour start date in Japan	70% of total tour fare
4 days to 1 day prior to tour start date in Japan	100% of total tour fare
No show or on and after tour start date in Japan	100% of total tour fare

Disclaimer

Our tour programs are programmed under the careful consideration of your safety. The guides will pay sufficient attention to keep you away from accidents and / or injuries during the tour. However, we could not assume any responsibilities of the following incidents :

1. Accidents and / or injuries caused from bad physical conditions and / or any diseases or sickness which you already have suffered prior to the tour.
2. Accidents and / or injuries caused by your negligence to safety instructions given by your guide throughout the tour.
3. Any other accidents and / or injuries caused by your self-infliction.

At the time of filling in the Reservation Form, we will ask for you to make a signature on the disclaimer form sent with the reservation form.

Partner Company

@BOTANICAL Co., Ltd.

CEO – Kahoru Ohsumi

Address: 3-7 Nishi 16, Minami 9, Sapporo

Tour Operator / Contact

Nippon Travel Agency Hokkaido

Yuki Hamada

Email : yuki_hamada@nta.co.jp

Phone: (+81) 11-208-0182

Address: Nihonryoko Sapporo Bldg 5F, Nishi 4 Minami 1, Chuo-ku, Sapporo