

Akan-Mashu to Shiretoko

8 Day Cycling Tour



Scenic lakes, rolling farmland and stunning coasts – this tour truly has it all. Explore Hokkaido’s wild east as you cycle through Akan-Mashu National Park and up the eastern coast to Shiretoko National Park.

[**View Departure Dates & Prices**](#)

[**View Gallery**](#)

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About the Tour

Start	Finish	Grading	Season
Abashiri	Abashiri	4, Vigorous	Jun to Sep

About Akan–Mashu & Shiretoko National Parks

This guided cycling tour spans two of Hokkaido's most exciting locations: Akan–Mashu National Park and Shiretoko National Park. Akan–Mashu National Park is one of Japan's oldest national parks, and contains 3 of Japan's most awe-inspiring lakes: Lake Akan, Lake Mashu and Lake Kussharo. Pristine forests within active volcanic landscapes make this park a truly magical destination. Shiretoko National Park is a peninsula sandwiched between the Sea of Okhotsk and the Nemuro Strait. Its unspoiled wilderness, characterised by dense forests, rugged coastlines and picturesque mountains has earned it the reputation as Japan's last undeveloped frontier. This tour covers approximately 461 km (286 miles) over 7 days, through quintessential Hokkaido landscapes. Cycle through East Hokkaido and experience the unforgettable!

We operate this tour in partnership with Cycling Japan.

Tour highlights

- Experience wide variation in landscape across two different national parks.
- See firsthand Lake Kussharo, Japan's largest caldera lake, and Lake Mashu, one of the clearest lakes in the world.
- Enjoy Hokkaido's extensive hot spring culture, as well as its uniquely northern cuisine.
- Climb Shiretoko Pass, a thrilling pass that straddles the Shiretoko Peninsula, a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site.

Who is this tour for?

- Active cyclists whose perfect day out is riding on mountainous terrain for up to 70 km / 43 miles a day.
- Avid cyclists who enjoy cycling on back roads off the beaten path.
- Adventurous travellers who enjoy rural hospitality, staying in Japanese style accommodations with natural hot springs on site.

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Itinerary at a glance

Day	Activities	Distance		Ascent		Meals ¹
		km	mi	m	ft	
1	Meet in Abashiri	0	0	0	0	D ▾
2	Cycle in Abashiri	45	28	252	827	B, D ▾
3	Cycle to Lake Kussharo	88	55	688	2257	B, D ▾
4	Cycle to Nakashibetsu	84	52	852	2795	B, D ▾
5	Cycle to Rausu	65–113	40–70	298–400	978–1312	B, D ▾
6	Cycle to Utoro	46	29	1200	3937	B, D ▾
7	Cycle to Abashiri	85	53	357	1171	B, D ▾
8	Finish after breakfast in Abashiri	0	0			B ▾

Accommodation

Day	Type	Location	Ensuite Toilet	Ensuite Shower	Onsen	Laundry
1	Hotel ▾	Abashiri	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Hotel ▾	Abashiri	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Ryokan ▾ ²	Kawayu Onsen	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Hotel ▾	Nakashibetsu	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Ryokan ▾	Rausu Shiretoko	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Hotel ▾	Utoro Shiretoko	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Hotel ▾	Abashiri	✓	✓	✓	✓

We may change the facility options if our preferred accommodation is unavailable.

¹ B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

² Ryokan is a traditional Japanese inn.

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Travel style

We cycle from accommodation to accommodation on most days of this tour. We will provide a vehicle to support cyclists and carry water, snacks and any other items needed for cycling. You will load your luggage into the support vehicle, so you only need to carry daily necessities as you ride. If you need to stop cycling at any point during the day, you are welcome to take a rest in the support vehicle. Please be aware that the number of seats may be limited depending on the number of people and the type of vehicle we use.

Adverse weather

While we try to organise everything, mother nature is out of our control. If the weather is too bad to safely cycle, such as a typhoon or sudden storm, we will travel the route in our support vehicle. Along the way we will still stop at local restaurants and visit indoor facilities, so you can still experience the charm of the area while travelling safely and comfortably.

What's included

- 7 nights accommodation on twin share basis
- 7 breakfasts & 7 dinners
- Rental bike (hybrid with flat handlebar or road bike with drop bar handle)
- Other bike accessories
- All transport as described in the itinerary
- Snacks and refreshments
- English speaking local guide(s)
- Spare parts and mechanic services
- Support vehicle(s)

What's not included

- Airfare
- Lunches
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenses
- Drinks with included meals
- E-bike (available with a JPY 30,000 supplement)

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When do you run this tour?

We run this tour from June to September, and any time during this period makes for wonderful cycling! Outside of these months, snow and ice on the roads can make conditions dangerous for cyclists and the weather tends to be a little more unpredictable. Hokkaido's summer peaks in July–August, and during this time you'll be able to enjoy the sight of agricultural landscapes bursting with ripe crops, and bright, leafy green mountains. The scenery changes in September, with sunflower and mustard green meadows replacing wheat, corn or potato fields full of ripe crops. At higher altitudes in autumn, such as the mountain pass leading to Lake Kussharo, or roads in the Shiretoko area, you may start to see some dazzling autumn colours as they begin to sweep down from mountain peaks. The first snows of winter in Shiretoko usually arrive around October, transforming this wildlife-abundant peninsula into a frozen wonderland, bringing the cycling season to a close.

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Why cycle in Hokkaido?

Roads and drivers

Hokkaido has been a popular destination for bike touring with Japanese cyclists for many years. One of the main reasons for this is that our roads all have wide shoulders to accommodate the snow in winter, and this conveniently makes for spacious road cycling in summer. Another reason to love cycling in Hokkaido is the Japanese drivers, who are known for being polite and courteous to cyclists.

Comfortable climate

Japanese cyclists are also drawn to Hokkaido in the summer months as an escape from the hot and humid weather further south. Unlike the rest of Japan, Hokkaido doesn't experience a rainy season; while it does still rain here, endless weeks of rainfall are rare. Also, with less humidity and pollution, the air here is some of the freshest in the country.

Stunning scenery

Volcanoes, forests, rivers, lakes and ocean – Hokkaido has it all! Due to a lower population density than the rest of Japan, Hokkaido is blessed with wide open spaces and untouched roadside nature, the stuff of a cyclist's dreams. The scenery you'll ride through here is different to the cityscapes of Tokyo, Osaka or Kyoto. It's a side to Japan that many visitors don't see.

Culture

There's no better way to experience Japanese culture than bike touring with a local guide. Bathe in natural hot springs, savour the fantastic fresh seafood, local vegetables, fruit and even ice cream. And to complete your day as a Japanese adventurer, fall into a well earned sleep in futon bedding on tatami floors. It doesn't get any more Japanese than this!

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How to book this tour?

We will send you a link to our online booking form, where we ask for the travel information of all the members travelling with you.

Once we receive this, we will send you an invoice for your tour deposit, which is JPY 50,000 per person. **We will confirm your booking upon receipt of your deposit payment.**

The deposit is treated as a part of the tour price. Payment of the balance will be reminded by email, which is generally 5 weeks prior to the tour departure date.

We can accept payment via wire-transfer from local banks in a number of countries including but not limited to the US, UK, Australia, and Singapore. Payment will be made in your own currency via Wise (Wise's transaction fees will apply).

For credit card payment, we use Flywire, which will incur an additional transaction fee of 1.5%.

By paying for a deposit or full amount, you confirm that you have read, understand and agree to these [Terms and Conditions](#).

What is the minimum group size for this tour?

This is a mixed group tour and **we accept bookings for this tour from one person up**. However, our scheduled group tours require a minimum number of bookings for us to guarantee the departure of the tour, and to offer the tour at the price quoted. **The minimum number of booked guests to guarantee this tour is three people.**

If you book with less than three people, we will hold your place on the tour and wait for another group to join the tour. If the number of guests has not reached the minimum number by 30 days prior to departure, we will give you the option to cancel or to upgrade to a private departure.

If you choose to cancel, we will refund the amount you have paid us. You're welcome to check with us at any time about the status of bookings.

Please be advised that we will not be liable to compensate for any inconvenience or incidental expenses that might have incurred to you, including airline tickets.

Single Supplement

Our tours are priced on a twin share basis. Those travelling by themselves will need to pay an additional supplement for use of a single room. If you are happy to share a room with another guest - of the same gender - then let us know at the time of booking. If we match you with another solo traveller then we can discount the single supplement for both of you.

Travel Insurance

All guests joining our tours are required to have travel insurance. Please make sure you have valid travel insurance, covering the kind of activities you are undertaking during our tour, cancellations, loss of personal belongings, and any unforeseen circumstances while travelling.

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Travel to the Meeting Point

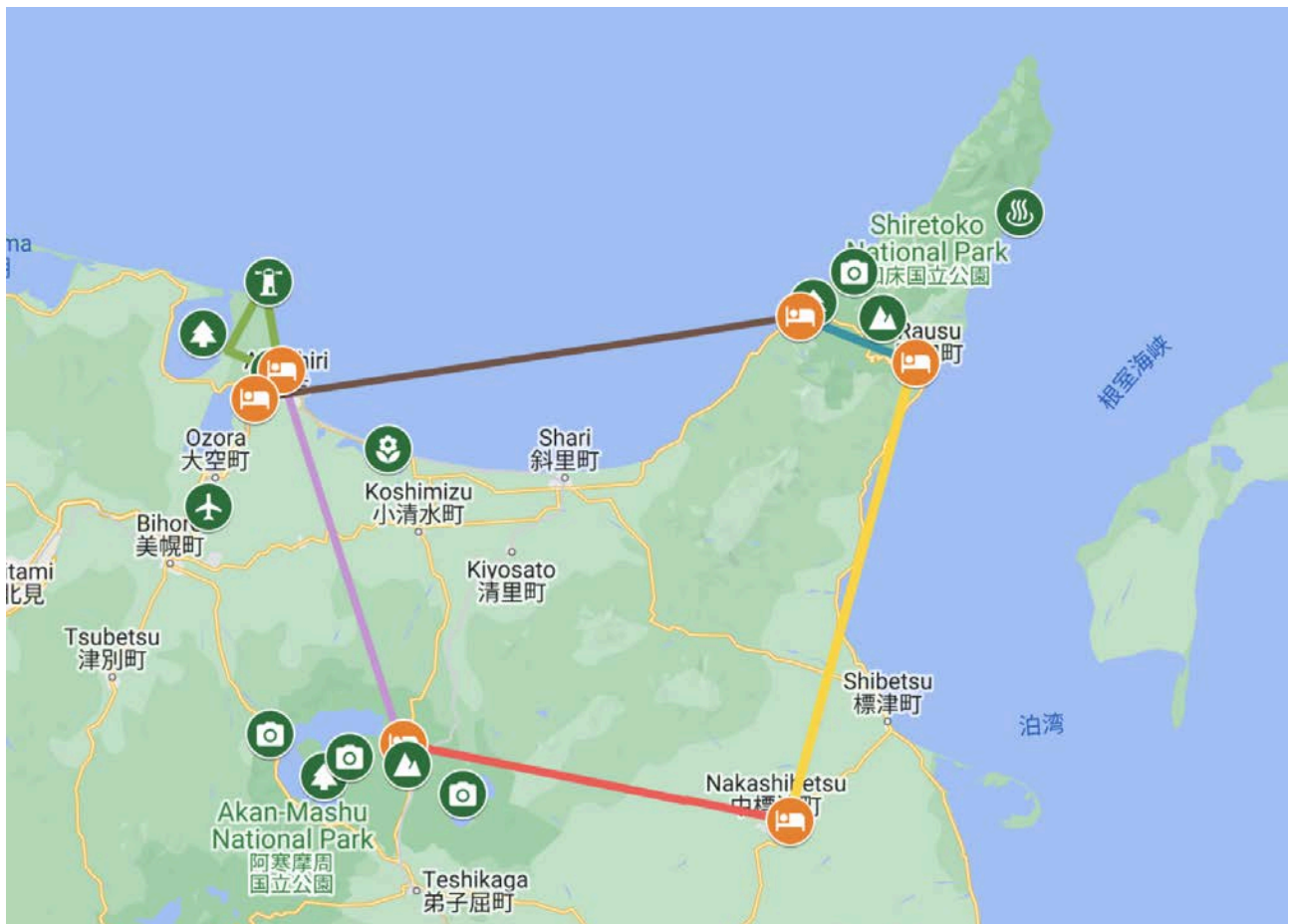
Our guide will meet you at 6:00pm at the hotel in Abashiri. The closest airport is Memanbetsu Airport (MMB). If you'd like to travel from the airport to Abashiri directly, a taxi is the quickest way, which costs approximately JPY 7,000.

Alternatively, you can take a shuttle bus from Memanbetsu Airport directly to Abashiri Station, which takes 26 min. The bus departs 11 times a day, at 8:30am, 8:50am, 9:35am, 10:30am, 1:10pm, 1:45pm, 2:15pm, 3:05pm, 5:05pm, 6:40pm and 7:35pm. The cost is JPY 1,050 per person.

You can search train timetables in English on [Japan Transit Planner website](#).

Tour map

To view the route on Google My Maps, [click here](#).



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Day-to-Day Itinerary

Day 1 - Meet in Abashiri

We meet at about 6 pm at our hotel in Abashiri near the station. It takes 5.5 hours by train from Sapporo to Abashiri Station, and 2 hours by flight from Tokyo Haneda to Memanbetsu Airport.

After a tour briefing & introduction, we stroll around Abashiri and have a scrumptious welcome dinner in town.

If you have some time to spare before the tour commences, the Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples, as well as the Abashiri Prison Museum are popular sights in Abashiri worth visiting, and are both accessible by bus.

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
D	0 km / 0 miles	0 m / 0 ft	Hotel in Abashiri

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Day 2 – Cycle Loop from Abashiri to Cape Notoro

After bike fitting and a quick safety briefing, we head out to Cape Notoro. As we leave Abashiri, we soon hit the Okhotsk Sea coastline, where we pass by several temples, as well as a small fishing village. A short, gradual hill leading to the cape serves as excellent preparation for the rest of the tour's more challenging climbs.



We spend some time at Cape Notoro's lookout point, which affords a lovely panoramic view of the sea. We then enjoy a pleasant downhill

to Lake Notoro, a small brackish lake that is home to the largest glasswort (a succulent plant which thrives in saline environments) community in Japan. This glasswort turns a very vibrant red in autumn. After cycling down the lakeside road, we connect to the cycling path which brings us back to Abashiri.

For dinner, we pay a visit to our favourite okonomiyaki (savoury pancake) restaurant, where the meal is prepared and cooked right in front of your eyes!

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	45 km / 28 miles	252 m / 827 ft	Hotel in Abashiri

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Day 3 – Cycle from Abashiri to Lake Kussharo

We leave Abashiri and ride south to the sweeping Kussharo Caldera via Bihoro Pass. From the top of this pass we can see a fantastic view of Lake Kussharo, as well as the many mountains which encircle the caldera. Looking out from this point, you truly gain a sense of the scale of the volcanic activity which formed the entire landscape, and which blessed the area with its beloved hot springs.



After lunch at the rest house here, we enjoy a downhill ride to Lake Kussharo, the largest caldera lake in Japan, and the second largest lake in Hokkaido. The lake is also one of the three major lakes in Akan–Mashu National Park. We pay a brief visit to Sunayu, a popular foot spa site where if you dig a hole in the shore's sand, hot spring water wells up in a matter of seconds. Tonight's accommodation is located in the hot spring town Kawayu Onsen.

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	88 km / 55 miles	688 m / 2257 ft	Ryokan in Kawayu Onsen

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Day 4 – Cycle from Kawayu Onsen to Nakashibetsu

We begin today by cycling to Mt. Io, or "Sulphur Mountain." This still active volcano last erupted about 600 years ago, and to this day continues to emit massive billows of sulphuric steam into the sky. You can see for yourself how stained the steam vents are with an almost unearthly shade of sulphuric yellow!



After a gradual, but long uphill climb, we reach the lookout point at Lake Mashu. This is another of Akan–Mashu National Park's three major lakes, with pristine waters set deep in a caldera of its own. Its high, steep cliffs prevent people from accessing its shores, a feature which is believed to have helped it retain its immaculate water quality to this very day. The lake is regularly veiled in mist and fog, but if we get lucky, we will be able to catch a glimpse of its renowned "Mashu-blue" surface. The rest of the day's cycling is a leisurely downhill and flat route into the farming area of Nakashibetsu.

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	84 km / 52 miles	852 m / 2795 ft	Hotel in Nakashibetsu

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Day 5 – Cycle from Nakashibetsu to Rausu

This morning we enjoy the change in scenery as we emerge from farmland and into the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site-designated Shiretoko Peninsula, considered by some to be the last unexplored region of Japan.



We cycle along the eastern coast of the peninsula for today's destination, a small fishing village called Rausu, famous across Japan for its production of kombu - sea-kelp that is an essential ingredient in Japanese cuisine. This area is also well known for its delicious, fresh seafood - king crab, in particular.

After we arrive in Rausu, you have the option to spend the afternoon either driving or cycling 24km further to a secluded seaside onsen called Aidomari. Let the sound of waves soothe and recharge you for tomorrow's ride!

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	65-113 km 40-70 miles	298-400 m 978-1312 ft	Ryokan in Rausu Shiretoko

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Day 6 – Cycle from Rausu to Utoro

Today we get a true taste of Shiretoko Peninsula's awe-inspiring beauty. Leaving Rausu, we cycle up the Shiretoko Pass to the other side of the peninsula. It is a gradual and long 15km to the top of the pass, where you will be rewarded with a breathtaking view of Mt. Rausu, the highest peak in the Shiretoko Mountain Range. The mountain's majestic figure in contrast with the azure blue sea in the distance is a truly wonderful sight to behold.



We enjoy a leisurely downhill to the Shiretoko Nature Center, where we have a quick lunch, and an optional short walk to Furepe Waterfall, a beautiful waterfall which empties out from a sharp cliff into the sea. We also have the option to take a 9km side trip to Shiretoko Five Lakes, where we can walk through a very unique, beautiful landscape dotted by small lakes, each fed by underground spring water. If the weather permits, there will be a chance to see a truly beautiful sunset from our accommodation in Utoro.

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	46 km / 29 miles	1200 m / 3937 ft	Hotel in Utoro Shiretoko

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Day 7 – Utoro to Abashiri

Today we say so long to Shiretoko Peninsula and make our way back to Abashiri alongside the Sea of Okhotsk coast.

In early July, potato fields on the left hand side will be in spectacular full bloom! We make a brief stop at the Koshimizu Wildflower Reserve to observe the diverse array of wildflowers in bloom during spring and summer, such as the Japanese Rose and the Siberian Lily.



We then ride to our final accommodation of the tour, this time located beside Lake Abashiri. Enjoy relaxing in the outdoor onsen with a lovely view of the lake spread out before you!

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
B	85 km / 53 miles	357 m / 1171 ft	Hotel in Abashiri

Day 8 – Farewells

The tour will wrap up after breakfast. You can easily take a bus from your hotel to Abashiri Station or Memanbetsu Airport.

Meals			
B			

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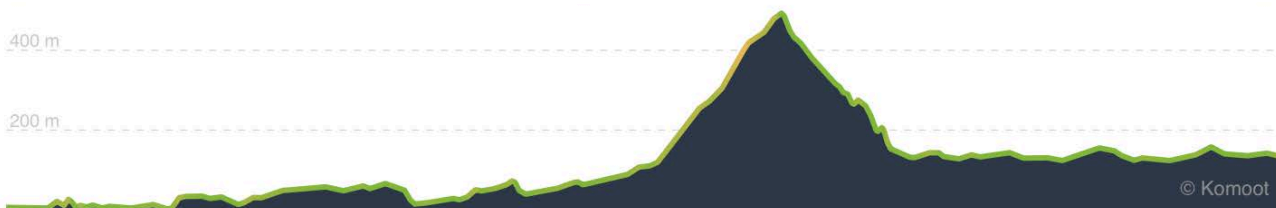


Elevation profiles

Day 2 - Abashiri to Cape Notoro loop **Distance** - 45 km / 28 miles **Ascent** - 252 m / 827 ft



Day 3 - Abashiri to Kawayu Onsen **Distance** - 88 km / 55 miles **Ascent** - 688 m / 2257 ft



Day 4 - Kawayu Onsen to Nakashibetsu **Distance** - 84 km / 52 miles **Ascent** - 852 m / 2795 ft



Day 5 - Nakashibetsu to Rausu

Distance - 65-113 km / 40-70 miles **Ascent** - 298-400m / 978-1312ft



Day 6 - Rausu to Utoro, Shiretoko **Distance** - 46 km / 29 miles **Ascent** - 1200m / 3937ft



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Day 7 - Utoro to Abashiri **Distance** - 85 km / 53 miles **Ascent** - 357 m / 1171 ft



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Rental bike & equipment

We provide a choice of hybrid (flat-bar) or road (drop bar) Trek Bikes to use for the tour. You can choose to upgrade to an E-bike at an extra cost of **JPY 30,000** per person on this tour. At the time of booking, please let us know which type of bike you'd like us to reserve for you.

You're welcome to bring your own bike if you wish, and we will take care of storing the bike case or box for you while you're on the tour. Please note that the tour cost will not be discounted for bringing your own bike.



Hybrid
TREK FX 7.4
Frame sizes available
from 15 to 22.5 inch



Road
TREK 1.2
Frame sizes available
from 43 to 60 cm



E-bike
Panasonic Jetter
Frame sizes available
from 15 to 20 inch



Our recommended reading

[Why You Need to Try Cycling in Hokkaido](#)

[What to pack for Hokkaido?](#)

[How to onsen \(like a local!\)](#)

[Vegan & Vegetarian in Hokkaido](#)

[Hokkaido Travel Tips & Common Questions](#)

[The Ainu, from a Hokkaido local's perspective](#)