

Around Daisetsuzan

6 Day Hiking Tour



Explore volcanic craters, tranquil lakes and the wild wetlands of Daisetsuzan National Park while discovering the culture and delicacies of central Hokkaido on this multi-day guided hiking adventure.

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About the Tour

Start	Finish	Grading	Season
Asahikawa	Asahikawa	Intermediate Hiking	Jun to Sep

About Daisetsuzan National Park

On this itinerary we discover the best of the vast Daisetsuzan National Park. We will summit Mt. Asahidake, the highest peak in Hokkaido, as well as Mt Kurodake in its northern region and we explore as far south as Lake Shikaribetsu. This tour is perfect for hiking enthusiasts who also enjoy discovering cultural connections with the landscapes they hike through.

Designated as a Japan National Park in 1934, Daisetsuzan holds a special place in the hearts of the people of Hokkaido. The park covers over 2,300 square kilometres (570,000 acres), which is bigger than the size of Tokyo and is home to a dramatic mountain range, giving Daisetsuzan its nickname of “the Roof of Hokkaido”.

Tour highlights

- Climb the two prime peaks of Mt. Asahidake and Mt. Kurodake.
- Explore the alpine ponds of Daisetsu Kogen, a habitat for Brown Bears.
- Take in the views of Lake Shikaribetsu from the summit of Mt. Hakuunzan.
- Take in views of Ansei Crater, an active volcanic crater.
- Soak in natural hot springs throughout the tour!

What is the hiking like on this tour?

While the distances covered on our hikes are short - 5.6 km / 3.5 mi on average - the trails pack a punch, going up and down 460 m / 1,500 ft over that distance. The trails in the Daisetsuzan are “rugged” to put it mildly. Expect to make knee-straining steps on large rocks, clamber over exposed roots and slip and slide on loose gravel or mud. Our hikes take us above the tree line, where we are exposed to the full brunt of Hokkaido’s mountain weather - which is an experience in its own right.

This tour is perfect for strong walkers looking to step up to a mountainous challenge. It is also well suited for hikers with experience in the mountains who don’t measure a day’s success by the distance covered.

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Itinerary at a glance

Day	Activities	Km	Miles	Meals ¹
1	Meet in Asahikawa, Hike up Mt. Kurodake	3.3	2.1	D ▾
2	Hike amongst the Daisetsu Kogen alpine ponds	6.4	4.0	B, D ▾
3	Hike up Mt. Hakuunzan	4.6	2.9	B, L, D ▾
4	Hike to Ansei Crater & up Mt. Kamifurano ridge, Explore Biei	6.7	4.2	B, D ▾
5	Hike to the summit of Mt Asahidake	5.8	3.6	B, L, D ▾
6	Farewells in Asahikawa	0	0	B ▾

Accommodation

Day	Type	Location	Ensuite Toilet	Ensuite Shower	Onsen	Laundry
1	Hotel ▾	Sounkyo Onsen	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Ryokan ▾ ²	Nukabira Onsen			✓	✓
3	Hotel ▾	Furano	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Hotel ▾	Asahidake Onsen	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Hotel ▾	Asahikawa	✓	✓	✓	✓

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

This hiking tour is a series of day hikes; either return or loop routes. We always come back to our van at the end of the day and transfer to our accommodation. This means your overnight luggage can stay in the van and you can experience the best of the Daisetsuzan's hiking with just a light day pack!

Adverse weather

While we try to organise everything, mother nature is out of our control. If the weather is too bad to safely hike, such as a typhoon or sudden storm, we will travel to the next inn 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

- 5 nights accommodation on twin share basis
- 5 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 5 dinners
- Cable car return trip on the Asahidake Ropeway
- Cable car return trip on the Kurodake Ropeway
- All transport as described in the itinerary
- English speaking local guide(s)

What's not included

- Airfare
- 4 Lunches
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenses
- Drinks with included meals

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When do you run this tour?

We run this tour from June to September and anytime during these months is the perfect time to go! Expect some snow on the trails in the spring season in late June. Spring is also the prime time to see alpine flowers in full bloom, the meadows coming alive with carpets of colour. Summer arrives in Daisetsuzan in August, when most of the snow has melted away. During September, the mountain sees a change in colour with the leaves ablaze with yellows, oranges and reds. The first snowfall usually occurs just before October on Mt. Asahidake which marks the coming end of the autumn hiking season.

Why hike in Hokkaido?

Diverse trails

Our mountains nationwide are covered with hiking trails which date back to Shugendo culture, Japan's ancient mountain asceticism. The trails were built over the years to reach the most prominent and sacred peaks. Information about these trails, however, remains untranslated to a great extent, especially so in rural areas. Together with our experienced local guides, you'll hit the road less travelled and explore hiking trails which date back centuries!

Flora & fauna

Hokkaido has evolved in its own unique way for millennia which has given rise to its unique flora and fauna. In the last ice age, Hokkaido was separated from mainland Japan but retained its connection with the Russian island of Sakhalin. Due to this, there are many species found only here within Japan, including brown bears, squirrels and chipmunks. Hiking in Hokkaido provides plenty of opportunities to spot these unique species.

Culture

There's no better way to experience Japanese culture than hiking 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 sign up 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 accept payment via Wise or Flywire. We will send you payment links, which you can use to send payment directly to ourselves (you don't need to create a Wise or Flywire account to send the funds). When paying via Wise, payment is available in Japanese Yen only, and you must pay any currency exchange or transfer fees by yourself.

For credit card payment or domestic bank transfer converted to your own currency, 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 four people.**

If you book with less than four 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 60 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 in Japanese Yen that 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.

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Travel Insurance

All guests joining our tours are required to have travel insurance. Please make sure you have a 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.

Travel to the Meeting Point

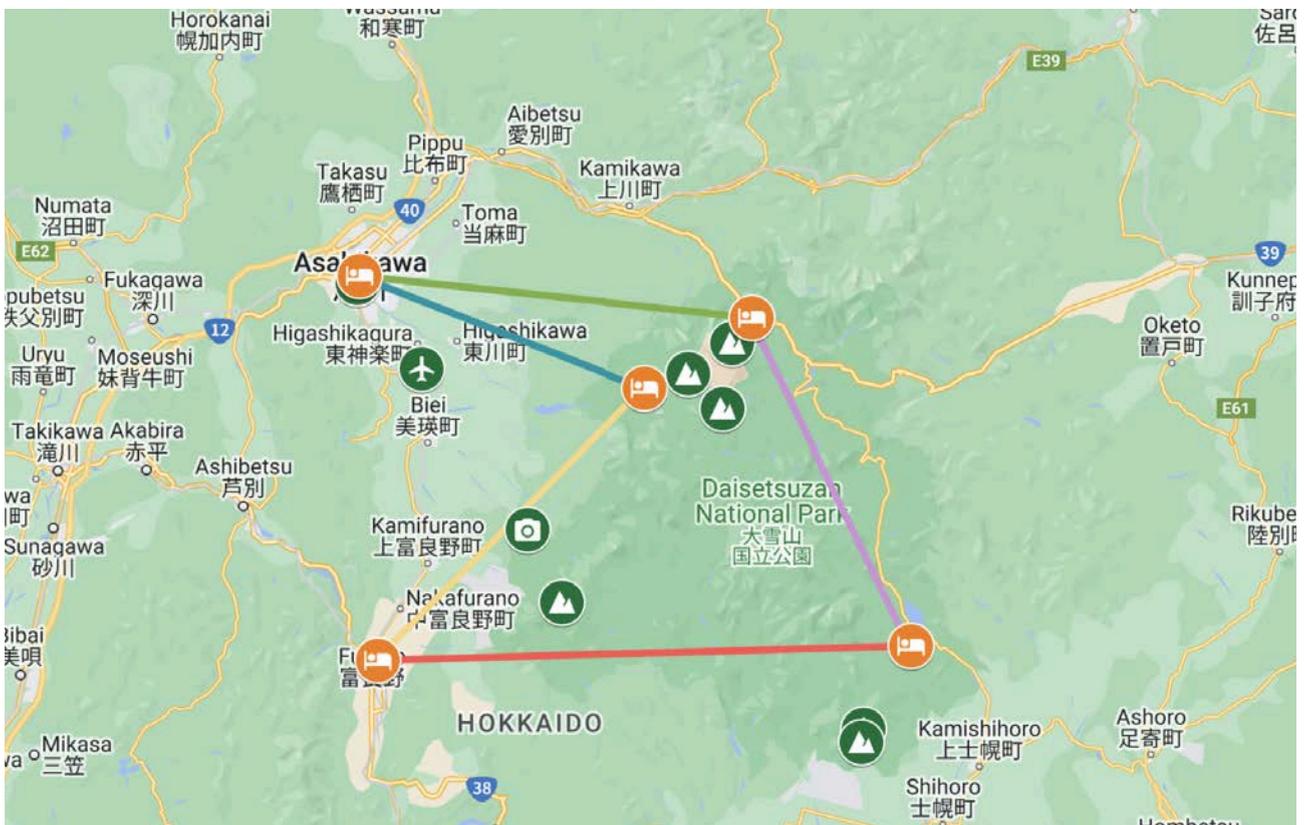
We will meet at Asahikawa Station at 9:30 am on the first day. We recommend that you arrive in Asahikawa the day before departure to easily meet your group on the tour's first day. If you are flying into Asahikawa Airport (AKJ) from Tokyo Haneda on the first day, please make sure you reserve an early morning flight that arrives at Asahikawa between 8:30am and 9:30am. This allows us to pick you up from the airport on the day.

An alternative to flight is rail (Japan Railway, abbr. JR). Trains travel every 30-60 mins between Sapporo and Asahikawa. Upon booking, please let us know your travel plans to Asahikawa, and we will confirm in detail where and what time we will meet on the first day.

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 Asahikawa, Hike up Mt. Kurodake

Your group will meet at Asahikawa Station at 9:30 am. Once everyone is together, we'll waste no time and hit the road to go to our first hike – Mt. Kurodake! We'll stop to buy a picnic lunch to enjoy later on the trail.



We'll take the Kurodake Ropeway followed by a chairlift to the 7th Station, located at 1,520 m / 4,987 ft. From there, we'll pick up the trail.

Along the way, we'll be able to enjoy a number of alpine plants, as well as unusually-shaped rock formations, remnants of Mt. Kurodake's volcanic past. At the 1,984 m / 6,509 ft summit, we can enjoy vast views into the heart of Daisetsuzan National Park.

After we summit the mountain, we'll descend back via the chairlift and stop by the Sounkyo Visitor Centre to refresh and learn a little more about the tour ahead. Afterwards, we'll take the ropeway back down the mountain to Sounkyo Onsen, where our accommodation is located. We'll enjoy a delicious dinner this evening and can refresh our muscles in the hotel's natural hot springs!

Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
D	3.3 km 2.1 mi	490 m 1,600 ft	Hotel in Sounkyo Onsen

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Day 2 – Hike amongst the Daisetsu Kogen alpine ponds

Today we will have an early start and drive over to Kogen Onsen which is 1 hour away from Sounkyo Onsen.

Daisetsu Kogen serves as a trailhead for the popular Kogen Numa (alpine ponds) hiking trail. This area is far from civilization and home to a great number of native Brown Bears, (*higuma* in Japanese) which are occasionally spotted by hikers in early summer. After arriving we have a briefing at the Higuma Information Centre about bear activity and the latest sightings before we hit the trail.



Situated between 1,230 m - 1,460 m (4,035 ft - 4,790 ft) above sea level, Kogen Numa provides opportunities to observe alpine flora and over a dozen alpine ponds of various sizes scattered along the trail. Once we return from our hike, we board our van to transfer to Nukabira Onsen, a hot spring village situated by Lake Nukabira. We will stay overnight at a historical hotel that has been renovated into a modern Japanese-style inn and is run by a friendly local family.

Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	6.4 km 4.0 mi	290 m 951 ft	Ryokan in Nukabira Onsen

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Day 3 – Hike up Mt. Hakuunzan

We'll kick the day off with a drive along Lake Shikaribetsu on a road only open during the snowless months from April to October. After approximately 30 mins, we'll arrive at the start of the trail to Mt. Hakuunzan on the shore of Lake Shikaribetsu.



The loop hike takes about 5 hours and starts with a flat trail along the lakeshore before tackling a steep climb to the summit of Mt Hakuunzan (1,186 m / 3,980 ft). If the weather is nice, we will stop at the summit to enjoy the views of Lake Shikaribetsu and our lunch – homemade *onigiri* rice balls. If we are lucky we might also hear and see the small Northern Pika who call this rocky peak home.

From the summit we descend back into the trees onto a broad ridgeline (where we will have lunch if the weather is not-so-good). A final steep descent gets us back to the carpark after a total of 4.6 km / 2.9 mi.

After our hike, we drive for 2 hours to our accommodation in Furano. The Furano area is known for its flower gardens, fresh produce and scenic landscapes and the town is sandwiched between the Tokachi Volcanic Group and the Yubari Mountain Range. Tonight, we will dine out in downtown Furano.

Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
B, L, D	4.6 km 2.9 mi	430 m 1,400 ft	Hotel in Furano

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Day 4 – Hike to Ansei Crater & Up Mt. Kamifurano ridge, Explore Biei

We'll check out of our hotel after breakfast and make our way to the town of Kamifurano, north of Furano city. After picking up some food for lunch, we will head towards Ansei Crater, nestled between several volcanic peaks. The landscape here is almost martian – the rocky landscape, marked by various pockets of sulphur, makes it easy to forget you are on Earth!



After admiring the crater, we will continue on to a view point on Mt. Kamifurano ridge, a physically challenging but steady uphill hike that will take you up and along the amazing ridgeline of the Tokachi Volcanic Group. Our efforts will be rewarded with some magnificent views of Daisetsuzan National Park and the smoking summit of Mt. Tokachi on a clear day.

We'll descend the way we came and take a little break this afternoon to explore the nearby picturesque town of Biei. Biei is part of the Association of the Most Beautiful Villages in Japan and is famous for its beautiful rolling hills, formed by rivers eroding ancient volcanic deposits.

After exploring Biei, we'll drive through the beautiful forests on the outskirts of Biei to Asahidake Onsen, situated at 1,100 m / 3,600 ft above sea level on the slopes of Mt. Asahidake. We stay the night here in the crisp mountain air enjoying the natural hot springs fed by Mt Asahidake.

Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	6.7 km 4.2 mi	440 m 1,444 ft	Hotel in Asahidake Onsen

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Day 5 – Hike to the summit of Mt. Asahidake

After breakfast at our accommodation, we'll make our way to the nearby Asahidake Ropeway for our final adventure. The ropeway will take us up to Sugatami Station, 1,600 m / 5,249 ft above sea level on Mt. Asahidake, the highest mountain in all of Hokkaido.



After exploring an easygoing route taking us around Sugatami Pond, a small volcanic crater lake, we'll head for the trail to the summit of Mt. Asahidake. The entirety of this trail, while not too long, is a steep uphill, making it our most challenging ascent yet. But before we know it, we will reach the summit at 2,291 m / 7,516 ft– a fitting conclusion to our adventure in Daisetsuzan National Park. We'll celebrate with lunch at the summit, gazing out across the park and Hokkaido.

After descending the ropeway, we'll hop back into our van and head to Asahikawa city, our tour coming full circle. We'll celebrate a successful tour together with a delicious local meal tonight.

Meals	Hike	Ascent	Accommodation
B, L, D	5.8 km 3.6 mi	690 m 2,264 ft	Hotel in Asahikawa

Day 6 – Farewells in Asahikawa

Our tour finishes after breakfast at our hotel. You can walk over to JR Asahikawa Station nearby, from where you can take a train to Sapporo or a bus to Asahikawa Airport to head to your next destination. Itterashai!

Meals			
B			

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Our recommended reading

[The Hiker's Guide to Weather in Daisetsuzan National Park](#)

[Hiking Safely in Hokkaido](#)

[What to pack for Hokkaido?](#)

[What is a disposable toilet bag?](#)

[Hokkaido Guide Stories – Around Daisetsuzan Hiking](#)

[A Local's Guide on What to Expect When Staying in Hokkaido](#)

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

[Vegan & Vegetarian in Hokkaido](#)

[Hokkaido Travel Tips & Common Questions](#)

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

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Elevation profiles

Day 1 - [Mt. Kurodake](#) **Distance** - 3.3 km / 2.1 mi **Ascent** - 490 m / 1,600 ft



Day 2 - [Daisetsu Kogen](#) **Distance** - 6.4 km / 4.0 mi **Ascent** - 290 m / 951 ft



Day 3 - [Mt. Hakuunzan](#) **Distance** - 4.6 km / 2.9 mi **Ascent** - 430 m / 1,400 ft

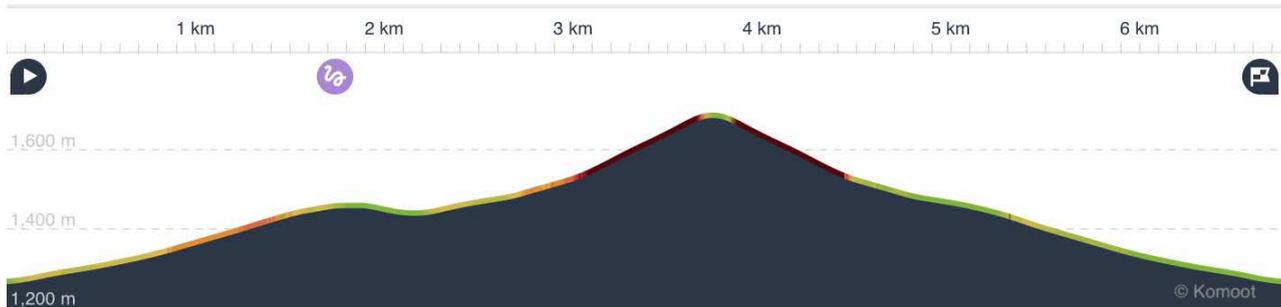


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Day 4 - [Ansei Crater & Mt. Kamifurano Ridge](#)

Distance - 6.7 km / 4.2 mi **Ascent** - 440 m / 1,444 ft



Day 5 - [Mt. Asahidake](#)

Distance - 5.8 km / 3.6 mi **Ascent** - 690 m / 2,264 ft

