

# Daisetsuzan Foothills

## 5 Day Cycling Tour



Head out on a relaxed but adventurous journey in the heart of Hokkaido at the foot of the Daisetsuzan Mountains. This agricultural belt, formed by the ancient fires and waters of nearby volcanoes, offers some of Hokkaido's most stunning scenery.

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

**[View Gallery](#)**

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### About the Tour

Start	Finish	Grading	Season
Asahikawa	Asahikawa	Relaxed Cycling	Late May to Sep

### About the Daisetsuzan Foothills area

On this itinerary we'll explore the lowlands at the edge of Daisetsuzan National Park, enjoying the mountain's changing vistas from afar. We'll see how active volcanoes Mt. Asahidake and Mt. Tokachi have influenced the strong connection with nature and agriculture in this area, from rice paddies fed with natural spring water to pastoral hills carved out by ancient volcanic mud deposits and rivers. This tour is perfect for individuals looking to level up their cycling game who also enjoy discovering cultural connections with the landscapes they cycle through.

This tour is operated in conjunction with Cycling Japan.

### Tour highlights

- Enjoy the rolling hills and panoramic mountain vistas of Biei.
- Cycle through the rice paddies and plains of Higashikawa, a town with its identity, community and commerce tied to the fresh spring water of Mt. Asahidake.
- Enjoy the transition from forest to farm land as you ride through towns known for both their timber and their edible produce, tasting the hard work and dedication of Hokkaido's farmers.
- Explore Asahikawa, a river city and central hub with Hokkaido's second-largest population.

### Who is this tour for?

- Casual cyclists whose perfect day out is riding on rolling terrain with only short climbs for up to 50 km / 31 miles a day with up to 600 m / 2000 ft of climbing.
- 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	Km	Miles	Meals <sup>1</sup>
1	Group meets in Asahikawa, Cycle Asahikawa to Biei	43.7	27.2	D ▾
2	Cycle Biei to Higashikagura	45.6	28.3	B, D ▾
3	Cycle Higashikagura to Pippu via Higashikawa & Toma	52.7	32.7	B, D ▾
4	Cycle Pippu to Asahikawa & Farewells	41.5	25.8	B, D ▾
5	Farewells in Asahikawa	0	0	B ▾

### Accommodation

Day	Type	Location	Ensuite Toilet	Ensuite Shower	Onsen	Laundry
1	Hotel ▾	Biei	✓	✓		
2	Hotel ▾	Higashikagura	✓	✓	✓	
3	Hotel ▾	Pippu	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Hotel ▾	Asahikawa	✓	✓	✓	✓

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

### Travel style

We aim to cycle from accommodation to accommodation on 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 when 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 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.

<sup>1</sup> B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

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## 5 Day Cycling Tour



### What's included

- 4 nights accommodation on twin share basis
- 4 breakfasts & 4 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

### When do you run this tour?

We run this tour from late May 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 changeable. Hokkaido's summer peaks in July-August, and you'll be able to enjoy the sight of agricultural landscapes bursting with ripe crops and greenery surrounding lakes and coastlines. The scenery changes in September, with rice paddies full of ripe crops nodding their heads to us as we pass. Towards the end of September, you may start to see some dazzling autumn colours starting to change the landscape.

# Daisetsuzan Foothills

## 5 Day Cycling Tour



### 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 or 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 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 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 a payment link 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 for both options, and you must use one of the payment links provided by us.

**Wise payments** are available in Japanese Yen only and require you to have a Wise account (Wise-to-Wise transfer only). You must pay any currency exchange or transfer fees yourself.

**Flywire payments** allow credit card payment or domestic bank transfer converted to your home currency. Credit card payments via Flywire incur an additional service charge of 1.5%, while domestic bank transfers via Flywire do not incur this service charge.

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

### What does the Minimum Number mean?

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 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

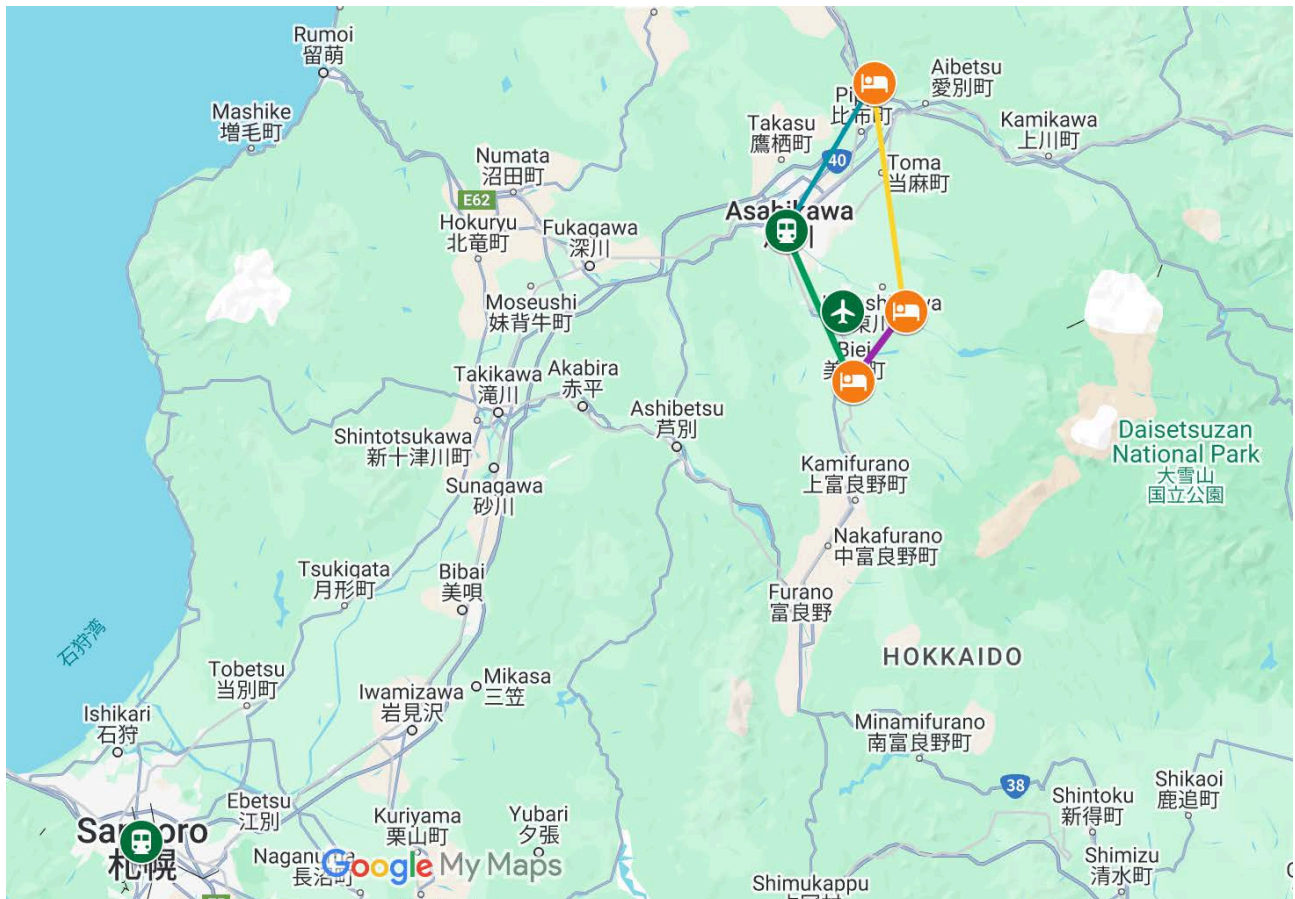
On the first day of the tour, we will meet at 9:30 am at JR Asahikawa Station. If you are flying into Asahikawa Airport (AKJ) from Tokyo Haneda on the first day, please make sure you reserve an early morning flight that arrives at Asahikawa Airport with enough time to transfer to Asahikawa Station before the tour's start time.

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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## 5 Day Cycling Tour

### Day-to-Day Itinerary

#### Day 1 – Group Meets in Asahikawa, Cycle Asahikawa to Biei

The group will meet up at Asahikawa Station at 9:30 am this morning. After getting to know each other and setting up our bikes, we'll get in the saddle and head out of town on a cycling road along the Chubetsu river. The cycling road will allow us to avoid midcity traffic and enjoy wonderful views of the river as we go. The very gradual incline as we head upstream makes for a nice warm-up as we head out of town.



After branching off onto a small tributary, we head up our first hill. The climb quickly flattens off and – if it's clear – we will be treated to our first view of the Daisetsuzan Mountains in the distance. We will stop at a local park for a picnic lunch, before heading across Biei River and taking the back road into the famed “patchwork hills” of Biei.

The “patchwork hills” are beautiful rolling hills created by volcanic mud deposits thousands of years ago then eroded away by ancient rivers. The hills are now used by local farmers to grow rotational crops, from potatoes to wheat to beans, giving them their namesake, a “patchwork” appearance. The constant up and down of rolling hills will give us a good workout, but the ever-changing scenery is a fitting reward.

We'll end the day at a hotel in central Biei. To celebrate our first day of cycling together, we'll have dinner at a local restaurant before relaxing for the night.

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
D	43.7 km 27.2 mi	435 m 1,427 ft	Hotel in Biei

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### Day 2 – Cycle from Biei to Higashikagura

After breakfast, we'll hop back on our bikes and take a forested road out to the north of Biei. Despite leaving behind the famous town, we will still be riding through rolling farmland that is arguably as pretty as the famous hills of Biei. After a few short climbs to get our blood flowing, we top out on a plateau with great views towards Mt. Asahidake, Hokkaido's tallest peak. From the plateau we descend to Higashikawa, a farming town on the edge of Daisetsuzan National park where we will take a break for lunch.



After eating, we'll head to Lake Chubetsu, a manmade dam lake surrounded by gorgeous sub-mountainous forests. In spring, fresh greens of various shades pop here and there while in autumn, red leaves reflect on the lake's waters. The dam is popular with local fishermen, and you'll likely see many of them gathering along the lakeshore. After enjoying views of the lake, we'll make a special stop at Daisetsuzan Gensui Park at the lake's far end. "Gensui" means "water's origin" in Japanese and this name comes from the fresh-flowing spring water that can be found here, gushing directly down from Mt. Asahidake. We'll fill up our water bottles here so you can taste it for yourself. After one sip, you'll understand why locals use this water to make their coffee, boil their rice and wash their vegetables!

We'll cycle around the other side of Lake Chubetsu on our way to Higashikagura, where we'll stay for tonight. Dinner will be served at our accommodation, which also has natural hot spring baths, fed by the waters of Daisetsuzan National Park. They are the perfect cure for sore muscles and buttocks after a long day of cycling, so relax and rest up ahead of our final full day of cycling tomorrow!

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	45.6 km 28.3 mi	608 m 1,995 ft	Hotel in Higashikagura

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### Day 3 – Cycle from Higashikagura to Pippu via Higashikawa & Toma

After breakfast at our accommodation (and one last morning dip in the hot springs if you would like) we'll head out for another day in the saddle. Today is the longest distance-wise, but with less climbing it won't feel that much more challenging – so relax and enjoy the ride!

We'll make our way from Higashikagura up to Toma, skirting the edge of Asahikawa. The forested lands around us will transition soon enough to vast, flat rice paddy plains as we cycle through Higashikawa town. You will find the farmland scenery here, with plentiful water thanks to nearby Mt. Asahidake, which is quite different from what we will have seen in Biei, where the topography does not make the region suited for growing rice. As we continue to Toma, the scenery alternates between forested hills and quaint flat valleys home to small-scale rice farming. Upon arrival in Toma, we will take a break for lunch.



From Toma, we'll continue to head through farmland until we pick up the Ishikari River, the third-longest river in Japan and the longest in Hokkaido. This river flows all the way from Daisetsuzan National Park to the Sea of Japan north of Sapporo and is of particular cultural importance to the Ainu on account of its salmon population. We'll follow the river to Pippu, a little-known town famous for its juicy strawberries and equally juicy trout!

We'll cycle through Pippu to our accommodation at the base of Mt. Hokurei. Dinner will be served here tonight and of course, there is another opportunity to enjoy some natural hot spring baths tonight!

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	52.7 km 32.7 mi	354 m 1,161.4 ft	Hotel in Pippu

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### Day 4 – Cycle Pippu to Asahikawa

Our journey comes full circle today as we return to Asahikawa. We'll cycle through Pippu and around the outskirts of Asahikawa, enjoying a relaxing flat ride through the largest scale rice farming we'll see on this tour. Depending on the season, you may want to keep an eye out for some particularly eye-catching rice paddies... this region makes Japanese news headlines every year on account of its quirky rice paddy art!



Our lunch stop will be in Takasu, another one of the farming towns bordering Asahikawa. One of the restaurant options specialises in venison (although there is more on the menu). Hokkaido is grappling with an explosion of its native deer population, which is having a catastrophic effect on the region's forests and, by extension, other native wildlife. At the same time the population of hunters is decreasing and it isn't seen as a viable career for many young people. To counter this, there has been a Hokkaido wide push to get venison on more plates and make it sustainable to manage the deer population.

After lunch, we'll cycle back into Asahikawa via the pleasant district of Takasu on its northern side, taking a break at Mt. Arashiyama to explore *cise*, traditional Ainu dwellings. This mountain and its surroundings were and still are an important site for the region's Ainu population, home to plants and trees used in Ainu cuisine or crafts. One last push from Arashiyama will bring us back along the Ishikari River to its junction with the Biei river at Asahikawa Station.

Upon reaching Asahikawa Station, we'll check into our comfortable accommodations right by the station – perfect for those catching early trains the next morning. But the adventure isn't quite over yet! We'll gather for one final celebration together over dinner, sharing stories from our cycling journey through the Daisetsuzan foothills and toasting to the memories we've made exploring this beautiful corner of Hokkaido.

Meals	Cycle	Ascent	Accommodation
B, D	41.5 km 25.8 mi	179 m 587 ft	Hotel in Asahikawa

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### Day 5 – Farewells in Asahikawa

The tour will wrap up after breakfast. Our hotel is conveniently located near JR Asahikawa Station, from where you can take a train to Sapporo, as well as the airport shuttle to Asahikawa Airport. Make sure you haven't left anything behind and have a safe onward journey!

Meals			
B			

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### Elevation profiles

**Day 1** - Asahikawa to Biei

**Distance** - 43.7 km / 27.2 mi

**Ascent** - 435 m / 1,427 feet



**Day 2** - Biei to Higashikagura

**Distance** - 45.6 km / 28.3 mi

**Ascent** - 608 m / 1,995 feet



**Day 3** - Higashikagura to Pippu via Higashikawa & Toma

**Distance** - 52.7 km / 32.7 mi

**Ascent** - 354 m / 1161.4 feet



**Day 4** - Pippu to Asahikawa via Takasu

**Distance** - 41.5 km / 25.8 mi

**Ascent** - 179 m / 587 feet





# Daisetsuzan Foothills

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### Rental bike & equipment



#### Road

Trek 1.2

Frame sizes from 43 to 60cm



#### Hybrid

Trek FX 7.4

Frame sizes from 15 to 22.5 inches



#### Road Upgrade (+ JP¥25,000pp)

Canondale Topstone / Soma Double Cross etc

Frame sizes from 50 to 58cm



#### E-Bike (+ JP¥25,000pp)

Panasonic Jetter / Giant Escape

Frame sizes from 15 to 20 inches



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, or a road bike with upgraded components, at an extra cost of **JP¥25,000** 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.

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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.

### Our recommended reading

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

[What to pack for Hokkaido?](#)

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

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

[Vegan & Vegetarian in Hokkaido](#)

[Going Gluten Free in Hokkaido](#)

[Hokkaido Travel Tips & Common Questions](#)

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