

Chitose & Lake Shikotsu



Day 1

Your guide will meet you at Chitose Airport and explain the outline of the tour. From the airport, head to Chitose Shrine by private vehicle to offer a prayer ahead of your trip. Chitose Shrine is home to the deities of food and water. Climb the steps to the main shrine to find the sacred water that flows from the surrounding forest.



Day 2

Don snowshoes and head to the Shichijo falls on the south side of Lake Shikotsu. Along the way, look out for deer and other wild animals. The tree-lined path is deep in fluffy snow and the waterfall is a frozen sculpture of icicles. After lunch, enjoy stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) on a transparent board and fully appreciate the crystal clear water of Lake Shikotsu. There are spectacular views of the three Shikotsu mountains, including Mount Eniwa. Feel free to stand, sit or lie down on the board while taking in the majestic scenery.



Day 3

Hike up Mount Ichankoppe (829 meters). Its name means "the river where salmon and trout spawn" in Ainu. The start of the hike is rather steep but from the third station relief comes in the form of magnificent views of Lake Shikotsu. The hike from there to the eighth station is along a gently ascending ridge. The views from the outer rim of the mountain include Lake Shikotsu and Mount Tarumae. If you are lucky, you may see Ezo deer and woodpeckers.



Day 4

After arriving in Niseko, set off in snowshoes for a two-hour forest walk. Enjoy the winter nature while looking out for animal tracks and birds. Leave the forest and head through fields to dig for potatoes buried under the snow. Storing potatoes in the snow keeps them fresh and makes them taste sweeter. Later, enjoy a barbecue in a *kamakura*, a small snow house. The local ingredients used include venison, homemade Yotei sausages, winter vegetables from Niseko and scallops from Toyoura Bay.

Day 5

Japan's powder snow, known as Japow, is the envy of the world. Discover its exquisiteness through backcountry skiing or snowboarding while taking in the majesty of Mount Yotei, also known as Ezo Fuji.

