

CYCLE HOKKAIDO

A CYCLE JOURNEY FOR CYCLISTS BY CYCLISTS

WORLD HERITAGE SHIRETOKO, LAKE AKAN, KUSHARO, FURANO & ASAHI DAKE.

- ☞ Relax in **hot spring baths** after your day in the saddle, some set outdoors in the forest.
- ☞ Stay in traditional Inns, including **5 nights luxury standard & eat delicious Japanese food.**
- ☞ **Support vehicle** throughout.
- ☞ The terrain varies from **coastal and flat**, to **mountain passes**. The bulk of the cycling is on fairly flat rural and coastal terrain.
- ☞ 34 km to 101 km per day.
- ☞ **Bilingual** tour escort.
- ☞ Cycle **world heritage area, national parks, past caldera lakes** and climb Hokkaido's **highest mountain, Asahi Dake (2290M).**
- ☞ The roads are **very smooth** and the maximum vehicle speed is **60 kmh**. Drivers in Japan tend to travel over the speed limit, but it being so low, and the fact that they are conscious of cyclists and usually move right over to the other side of the road, makes for safe comfortable cycling.

INTRODUCTION

Since I organised and ran my first cross country skiing and cycling tours in Hokkaido in the early 1980's, the nature and demand for this great product has changed slightly. The basics of the area have not changed, however, with superb hot mix bitumen roads for our cyclists, and some of the world's best powder skiing for our skiers.

Of course, the smooth wide roads with their mostly low traffic density and slow vehicle speeds are just the start. The essence of the far north is to be found here. Caldera lakes in extinct volcanoes, high snow capped peaks, crystal clear mountain streams and deep mysterious forests of Hokkaido Red Pine and Silver Birch with their population of brown bears still largely intact.

Throughout is the ever present Japanese foot print, existing side by side with nature. Small sea side fishing villages and rural farms with large land holdings still have their temples tucked away in quiet Larch filled groves. Ever present are the many artisans who have escaped the crush of city life in the south to the frontier land of Hokkaido. All of this makes for a destination that mixes wild nature at it's most beautiful with the elements of this unique culture.

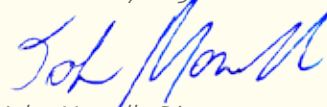
For cyclists, this place is superb. The wide open smooth roads roll before you as you explore from the coast to the mountains,



staying nightly in wonderful inns. Here you can soak your cares away in a hot spring bath before a banquet of superb local food.

And how has it changed? For this cycling tour we now only cater for serious cyclists. You will be travelling with a like minded group of riders who not only like adventure, but know and enjoy the full spectrum of a day in the saddle in a unique new environment.

For 2009 and beyond we have changed the itinerary to take into account the ever changing impact of road and tunnel building. The route has moved away from the Sapporo area to encompass the wild east of Hokkaido with its unique world heritage area, the Shiretoko Peninsula. We also now visit the superb caldera lakes and mountains of central Hokkaido, as well as keeping the mighty Daisetsusan National Park and the Furano area in the itinerary. Our numbers are 14-16 on this tour. I look forward to hearing from you and to you joining us for this wonderful cycling and cultural holiday.



John Morrell - Director



Tour Details 2011/12

2011 June 20-30 2010 June 18-28

\$4490 Ex Memanbetsu(land Only)* Call about air fares. **Includes:** Fully escorted; support vehicle; 10 nights accommodation twin or group share (single option POA); 10 dinners and 10 breakfasts; all transfers in Hokkaido including back to Asahikawa airport at the end of the tour; celebratory dinner last night; meet Memanbetsu airport mid afternoon day 1. Contact us for competitive air fares.

Not Included: air fares; bicycles (please note we have several road bikes for hire POA); all items of a personal nature; travel insurance (compulsory); lunches; entry fees; alcohol.

How to Book: Send the booking form with \$A250 deposit. All credit cards accepted. Full trip notes will then be sent which includes bike prep, equipment list and other details. Please note this tour is operated through AWAY WE GO TOURS LN:2TA5460

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TOUR OUTLINE

Please note that changes may occur in the exact route due to accommodation availability at time of booking or other unforeseen circumstances.

Day 1. Arrive Memanbetsu airport and meet group and leader approx mid afternoon. Transfer to first night accommodation and prepare bikes. LUXURY ACCOMMODATION.

Day 2. **77 km**
Our first days full ride takes us through coastal hinterland farming country and through small coastal villages as we head towards the Shiretoko Peninsula. Today we spend the night in a hot spring bath resort. LUXURY ACCOMMODATION.

Day 3. **77 km**
We start the day with a 14 km climb! The support vehicle can be used but we encourage you to ride this hill to fully enjoy the beauty of this world heritage area. After a good rest at the top and a short walk we begin our descent back to the coast before heading south to our nights accommodation. Again we cycle through coastal fishing communities with plenty of time to stop and explore the small harbours and beaches enroute.

Day 4. **86 km**
The superb hot mix roads continue as we head inland through rich alluvial farm lands and large farms that differ markedly from the small plots of southern Japan. Here we have a backdrop of steep mountains as we cruise along the superb wide roads of Eastern Hokkaido. Today is caldera lake day as we travel past several of these extinct volcanoes with their crystal clear mountain water during the course of the ride. The day includes some climbs of varying length. We finish the day in another superb hot spring bath resort town set amidst the backdrop of caldera lakes and steep conifer and silver birch covered mountains. Superb cycling.

Day 5. **59 km**
We continue through the spectacular central mountains with ancient volcanic lakes and calderas the theme of the day. After leaving the previous nights accommodation, we continue over gently rolling country before a solid climb to a mountain pass that allows us to descend into a spectacular caldera lake.

Day 6. **99 km.**
The morning's ride is a continuation of the smooth gentle rolling country of the day before, glorious cycling terrain. We continue over the fertile northern reaches of the Tokachi Plain with its huge farms and backdrop of steep mountains. We stop in small towns along the way. After lunch in a small town at the foot of the Eastern ramparts of Daisetsusan National Park we enter the native forests around yet another superb mountain lake. On the gradual climb to this lake, there is a must see "teepee" coffee shop. This beautiful Lake is set amidst superb natural forests and again at the end of your day in the saddle you can explore this beautiful area and finish the day with a soak in a natural hot spring bath. Tonight's accommodation has both indoor and outdoor baths, the latter set amidst the forests and clear mountain streams.

Day 7. **101 km.**
We depart the mountains early and after a good climb of 8 km, we head through superb alpine forests and mountain lakes before a long descent back onto the edge of the Hidaka Mountain Range. After this we encounter a gradual climb of 10 kilometres to the top of a pass. From there we have the most exciting and exhilarating downhill ride of the tour of 20 km's to the small towns of central Hokkaido with their pristine forests and clean air. We then turn off the main road and ride past another lake, to our lodgings on its banks. Again the delights of thermal waters await you to soothe you after your day in the saddle.

Day 8. **59 km**
The route takes us over a small pass, and then down an incline with steep alpine views. Here we encounter a tapestry of rice fields along the banks of yet another pure Hokkaido mountain River which we follow before turning yet again onto small country roads and heading onto the rolling rural serenity of the central Hokkaido area under the imposing slopes of the nearby mountains. Enroute there are some must see artisans, including the gallery of Japan's most famous landscape photographer, as well as several other artists and photographers galleries.

Day 9. **72 km**
Leaving early the next morning we continue over farming valleys to the base of the final climb of the tour, a 12 km gradual climb to the base of the highest mountain in Hokkaido, Here we stay amidst the towering Hokkaido Red Pine and the ghost like Silver Birch forests. Yet again the soothing waters of natural hot springs await us in this area. The support vehicle can be used for the final climb.

Day 10. **45 km**
After a morning hike to the base of the mountain to see the wildflowers we have a relaxing two and a half hour cycle for our last morning's ride. This last ride is all downhill or flat and is a relaxing way to finish our "Tour De Hokkaido". After checking into your Inn you can visit potters, glass blowers and the Ainu textile museum. That evening we will have a celebratory dinner and you can then go out and explore the night life of this northern Japanese town.

Day 11. Depart by bus for Asahikawa Airport.



CYCLING FITNESS

This is a trip with some solid days in the saddle and is designed for regular cyclists. The route has several climbs and some long descents. Please have a close look at the route description on the back page. If you ride the Great Rides or train and ride weekly with some long rides (80-100km) thrown in, you will enjoy this ride like no other.

For those who are fit but are new to cycling, we recommend two months training program prior to the start of the ride, with some weekend rides up to 100km. Many people have joined our rides over the years, both in Japan and Australia, who have not done a lot of cycling. However they have had the right attitude (give it a go!) and have been aware that there are some big days, and they have enjoyed the rides immensely. It is a little subjective, so again, look over the notes, talk to riding friends and give us a call to clarify any issues.

THE INNS

Japanese Inns are wonderful and are a focal point of all our tours. They are run by friendly staff, are comfortable and add to the joy of experiencing this country. They vary in many ways from western hotels that you may be used to. The rooms have straw mat floors and 'futon's to sleep on. These are folded in the cupboards and are put out of a night time by the Inn keepers. In some instances we will have western rooms, depending on the availability of the rooms and the make up of the group. Of an evening, relax in a hot muscle soothing Japanese bath. The bathrooms also have showers.



Many of the Inns have natural hot spring baths and relaxing in their soothing waters with a beer in your hand is the best way to end a day of fun and adventure in Japan.

The meals at the Inns consist of healthy Japanese food. Most Japanese meals, based around meat, fish, or chicken are filling, healthy and delicious. Raw fish is a regular side dish, and is considered a succulent delicacy. All meals are different and the variety will add to your eating pleasure.

DAILY ROUTINE

Breakfast will be approximately 8:00 am. On the longer days we may arrange an earlier breakfast. After breakfast our staff pack the support vehicle prior to the briefing. On some days, if riders want to leave earlier and have a separate briefing, this can be arranged.

Each morning you will be given a thorough route briefing, including maps and notes to take with you for the day. This will include basic route descriptions, points of interest and other items. The information provided in the briefing allows you to ride at your own pace. The ride is NOT a "follow me" ride, which only works if everyone goes at the same pace, which never happens. Different riders team up and head off to enjoy the day exploring Hokkaido.

The support vehicle's timetable varies daily, depending on how long the days ride is. Each day, its main aim is to reach that day's accommodation prior to the first riders. The driver will then unload the luggage and arrange rooms. A list of rooms will be left at the front desk of each Inn so as riders arrive, they can settle in. Keep in mind this is important because the hotel/Inn staff do not speak English!

Within the constraints of fulfilling this requirement, the vehicle will sweep to the back, checking on riders etc. Keep in mind that if there are breakdowns, or other issues, on a long day, you may not see the vehicle for some time. For this reason you will be advised daily to carry your personal requirements (spare tubes, tools etc.) so as to be self sufficient and be able to enjoy the riding to the maximum.



For lunch you may decide to explore local eateries (this can be an adventure, but we encourage you to try it) or you can carry supplies with you to make lunch along the way.

Depending on your riding time, you should expect to arrive at your accommodations mid afternoon on most days, and earlier on some, giving you time to have a bath and explore the areas we visit. Dinner in the Inns is usually between 5:30 and 6:00 pm. In most Inns the baths are available for the duration of our stay, although the smaller ones may have some preparation time.

OTHER DETAILS

Bike Storage while Extending.

Bicycles can be stored at airports while doing non cycling extensions. Fees apply. You may also use popular local express services to send your bike on to other destinations.

Extra Costs

Following are some current costs in Japanese yen that you can use as a guideline only. The current exchange rate is around 70 yen to the \$A dollar, but please check for an accurate rate. Be sure to keep some cash for ropeway at Asahi Dake and souveigners.

Lunches:

- Noodle dishes • 500 -950
- Curry rice, Spaghetti dishes, fried rice • 550 - 1000
- Cutlets and rice with egg sauce • 500 - 750
- Sushi or Japanese take away • 350 - 2000

Dinner in Tokyo and Osaka enroute:

- Japanese style "Izakaya" • 2500 - 3000 including drinks and a variety of small dishes such as sashimi (raw fish) chicken on sticks, rice, fish, etc.
- Japanese style at hotel. • 1000 plus. A variety of meals based on fish, chicken or other seafood.
- Western style • 2000 - ?. No top end here.
- Coffee or tea in coffee shop • 300 - 400