# Discover the magic of Hokkaido with dedicated European desks

**Wednesday 31 July, 2024**

You are probably familiar with the famous cities of Japan, the wonderful likes of Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Hiroshima. But lovely as they all are, there's much more to this nation than one cluster of big cities. With its snow-capped mountains and forests of black pine, there's a rugged beauty to the Japanese countryside that most visitors never truly get to appreciate. We want to change that.

Hokkaido is Japan's northernmost island. Surrounded by the sea, it's roughly the same size as Austria, but with just 5.2 million residents it has a completely different feel. It's rightly famous for its incredible seafood, including delicious local specialities such as snow crab and sea urchin, while the local diet also includes delicious 'Genghis Khan'-style spiced mutton and dairy.

Because it lies that little bit further north, Hokkaido has a much more varied climate, with four distinct seasons and a rich natural environment. It has magnificent mountain ranges, tranquil lakes and vast, protected wetlands. There are cherry blossoms in spring, lavender and sunflowers in summer, rich red autumn leaves, and world-class powder snow in winter. We've collected a handful of our favourite destinations here:

**Where to go in Hokkaido**

Far to the north, the Shiretoko Peninsula is a UNESCO World Heritage Site where rare and wonderful wildlife make their homes. Paying careful respect to protected habitats, visitors can watch brown bears gambol in the surf, catch killer whales cresting from the waves, and witness the iconic Japanese red crane thrive in this unique ecosystem.

Beyond that, Hokkaido's cool climate is ideal for growing fruit, and wines such as Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Merlot are produced and enjoyed here with great enthusiasm.

Like much of Japan, the Hokkaido is volcanically active, which makes for some famously restorative hot springs at spa towns like Noboribetsu, Lake Toya, Jozankei and Lake Akan. There's nowhere better to soak away your aches and pains than in a steaming bath of gushing natural spring water.

The 2024 Olympic Games have now begun in Paris – and Hokkaido has an Olympic connection. The capital city of Sapporo hosted the Winter Olympics in 1972, establishing an affiliation with Munich (which hosted the summer games that same year) that has lasted more than half a century. A Munich Christmas Market held in Sapporo's picturesque Odori Park every year in November and December.

Snow and winter sports are very important in Hokkaido, and there's a good reason for that – it has some of the best powder snow in the world. As the frigid winter air rolls across the narrow sea from Siberia, it dries in a particular way, giving rise to some of the best snowsports conditions you can get. The central mountains are bursting with incredible ski resorts, and where else can you nibble on fresh-caught seafood as you luxuriate in an open-air hot spring for après ski? This is the best part of Japan to visit in the winter, and every year in early February, Sapporo hosts the Sapporo Snow Festival, one of the biggest snow festivals in the world, attracting around 2.5m visitors.

**Help with Hokkaido**

We at the Hokkaido Tourism Organisation love Hokkaido so much that we have opened five dedicated tourist desks across Europe. We will soon start to send out a variety of content, so please stay tuned! You can get in touch via the following email address, making sure to clearly note which office you would like to handle the request: info@hokkaidojapan.uk.

Our friendly local reps will be only too happy to help with any query

- **Hokkaido Rep Head Office UK:** 85-87 Bayham St, London, NW1 0AG
- **Hokkaido Rep Office France:** 16 Rue Raymond Marcheron, 92170 Vanves
- **Hokkaido Rep Office Germany:** Maximilianstraße 29, 80539 München
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## Media:





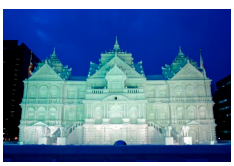












**Hokkaido will exhibit at IFTM 2024**

Representatives from Hokkaido will be at the International & French Travel Market in Paris this September. We look forward to welcoming you to the Hokkaido Japan stand from the 17th to 19th of September this year. We'll have more details to share nearer the time – but for now please mark your calendars and come say hi!



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