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## Expedition Details

### Expedition Details

#### Need More Info?

Focus your lens on Japan's exquisite wintertime landscapes, where snow, ice, and steaming hot springs provide the backdrop to a thrilling wildlife display. Explore dynamic Tokyo, and then fly north to Hokkaido to document the island's magnificent red-crowned cranes as they perform splendid courtship dances amid the snow. Zoom in on whooper swans congregating on crater lakes, and capture the ancient ways of the Ainu people. Marvel at ice and snow sculpture masterpieces at a winter festival; soak in soothing hot springs; and conclude your journey in the

ed snow

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Fly to Tokyo, cross the international date line, and arrive on Day 2. Transfer to one of Tokyo's dynamic neighborhoods and check into our centrally located hotel.

*Cerulean Tower Tokyu or Capitol Hotel Tokyu*

### Day 3 — Tokyo

Begin the day at an antiquities museum or a Japanese garden and venture into a traditional tea house to document the elaborate ritual of an authentic tea ceremony. Then jump forward in time on a photo walk through the Aoyama neighborhood, capturing its cutting-edge contemporary architecture. Have lunch at a local restaurant and soak up the serenity of Meiji Shrine, Tokyo's most important Shinto shrine. Photograph the sunset over the Tokyo skyline before tonight's welcome dinner.

*Cerulean Tower Tokyu or Capitol Hotel Tokyu (B,L,D)*

### Day 4 — Kushiro/Lake Akan

Fly to Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island. A photographer's dream, this vast wilderness is punctuated by snowcapped mountains, primordial forests, volcanoes, and lakes. In the fishing port of Kushiro, bring your camera along as we join the crowd at Washo Market, where vendors preside over gleaming piles of fish. Then drive to the marshes north of the city, designated a national park in 1987 to protect a resident population of endangered red-crowned cranes, also known as Japanese cranes. Photograph the splendid courtship rituals of these magnificent birds as they dance and leap in the snow. Later, continue to our resort overlooking Lake Akan, and unwind in the hotel's hot springs.

*Akan Yuku no Sato Tsuruga (B,L,D)*

### Day 5 — Lake Akan

Our day begins with a photo shoot at the Akan International Crane Center, a breeding center and museum. Shoot close-ups of regal cranes and their distinctive red crowns, pure white bodies, and black tails. Learn about the conservation efforts that have brought these birds back from the brink of extinction. Then visit a nearby cultural center to capture the colorful whirl of Ainu dancers clad in distinctly-patterned costumes. Spend the afternoon exploring the geothermal wonders of Akan National Park, framing bubbling hot springs and steaming fumaroles against a backdrop of snow. Look for sika deer, red foxes, and the vociferous whooper swans that congregate around thermal vents in the park's frozen crater lakes. This evening view fireworks over Lake Akan as part of a local winter festival.

*Akan Yuku no Sato Tsuruga (B,L,D)*

### Day 6 — Lake Akan/Abashiri/Sounkyo

After an optional morning photo shoot of Japanese cranes, drive to Abashiri and cruise the Okhotsk Sea on an icebreaker, training your lens on the drift ice floating by. Continue to Sounkyo, located in a giant gorge with multiple hot springs and surrounded by dramatic waterfalls and rock formations. In the evening, capture images of the Ice Waterfall Festival and the illuminated frozen waterfalls surrounding Sounkyo.

*Sounkyo Choyotei Hotel (B,L,D)*

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## Day 7 — Daisetsuzan National Park/Sounkyo

Spend the day framing the scenic, mountainous terrain of Daisetsuzan National Park. Known as the "roof of Hokkaido," the pristine wilderness of Japan's largest national park teems with wildlife, flora and unique geological features. In the evening, return to photograph the illuminated frozen waterfalls surrounding Sounkyo.

*Sounkyo Choyotei Hotel (B,L)*

## Day 8 — Sounkyo/Nagano

Drive to the Asahikawa Airport and return to Tokyo by airplane. Continue with a quintessential Japanese travel experience, moving at up to 200 miles per hour on the bullet train to Nagano, site of the 1998 Winter Olympics.

*Hotel Metropolitan Nagano (B,L,D)*

## Day 9 — Nagano/Japan Alps

Visit the 7th-century Zenkoji Temple, which houses the first Buddhist statue brought to Japan. Document the temple's elegant architecture and wander through surrounding courtyards to snap portraits of some of the several million pilgrims who visit each year. Continue to our traditional Japanese inn, or ryokan, situated in Kanbayashi Onsen—a picturesque village brimming with natural hot springs. Spend the remainder of the day unwinding in soothing indoor baths and outdoor hot springs nestled amid snow-dappled gardens, or get a head start photographing the nearby snow monkeys.

*Kanbayashi Hotel Senjukaku (B,L,D)*

## Day 10 — Japan Alps

Today, we focus our lenses on the northernmost-living, non-human primate in the world: the wild Japanese macaque, or snow monkey. A short walk along a nature trail brings us Jigokudani Yaen-Koen (Monkey Park), where more than a hundred snow monkeys descend each day from the surrounding cliffs to bathe in the park's hot springs. Take advantage of extraordinary opportunities to observe and photograph the monkeys at close range, capturing their antics as they soak,

groom, and play against a steamy, snow-draped backdrop. Cap off the day with a visually-sumptuous, multi-course *kaiseki* dinner featuring seasonal ingredients.

*Kanbayashi Hotel Senjukaku (B,L,D)*

### Day 11 — Japan Alps/Tokyo

Enjoy a morning at leisure, then return to Tokyo by bullet train. This evening, gather for a farewell dinner.

*Cerulean Tower Tokyu or Capitol Hotel Tokyu (B,L,D)*

### Day 12 — Tokyo/U.S.

Transfer to the airport for your return flight home.

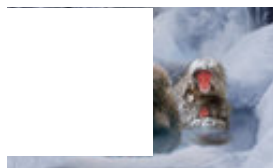
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## Related Trips

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Japan Photo Expedition



Winter in Japan

