

# TREKKING OTARU HISTORIC HERRING TRAIL



Otaru's modern history began when the Meiji Government (1868-1912) renovated its port to service Sapporo, the new capital of Hokkaido. Otaru prospered from trade and herring fishing, growing into a powerful financial center. Today, Otaru offers tourist locations ranging from its many historical buildings to natural landscapes including sun-drenched cliffs towering over the Sea of Japan.

This tour highlights the history of the herring industry, which was central to Otaru's growth and prosperity.

Otaru's glass making industry, now a cultural and economic powerhouse, began with the production of fishing floats. In Niseko-Shakotan-Otaru Kaigan Quasi-National Park, guests visit Mt. Shimoakaiwa, a sacred mountain. Locals have long prayed for fishermen's safety following various traditions.

Come explore the spectacular natural landscapes and their deep connections to Otaru's history and traditions. Learn about local folklore while trekking on Mt. Shimoakaiwa, take in the panoramic ocean views, and dive into the rich culture of Hokkaido.





## Highlights:

- Spectacular views of Ishikari Bay on the Otaru Beach Nature Trail
- Visit Mt. Shimoakaiwa's ancient shrine and learn the legend of the white dragon.
- Enjoy fresh, locally-sourced in a traditional Japanese lunch.
- A special chance to taste Otate scallops produced in Otaru's Shukutsu district
- Workshop on glass fishing floats showcasing Otaru's history of glassmaking

## Location:

Niseko-Shakotan-Otaru Kaigan Quasi-National Park in Otaru City, Hokkaido

## Main Activity:

Trekking along the Otaru Beach Nature Trail and going on the White Dragon Trek

## Difficulty:

3

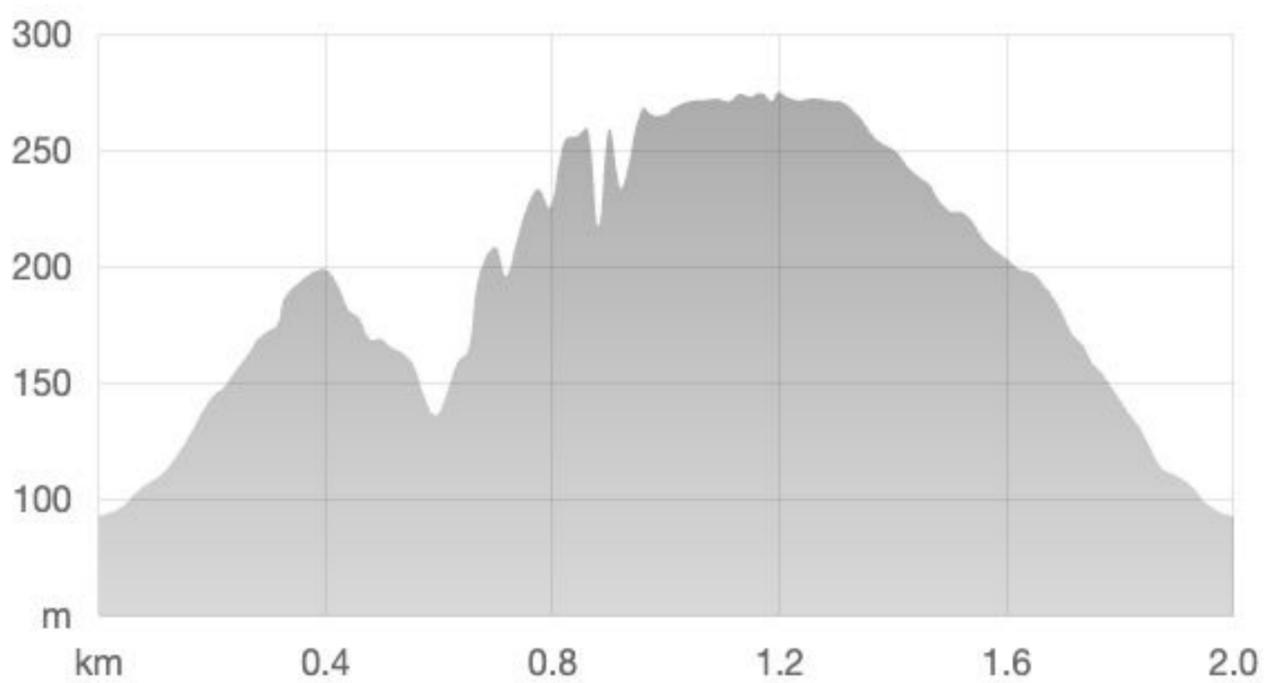
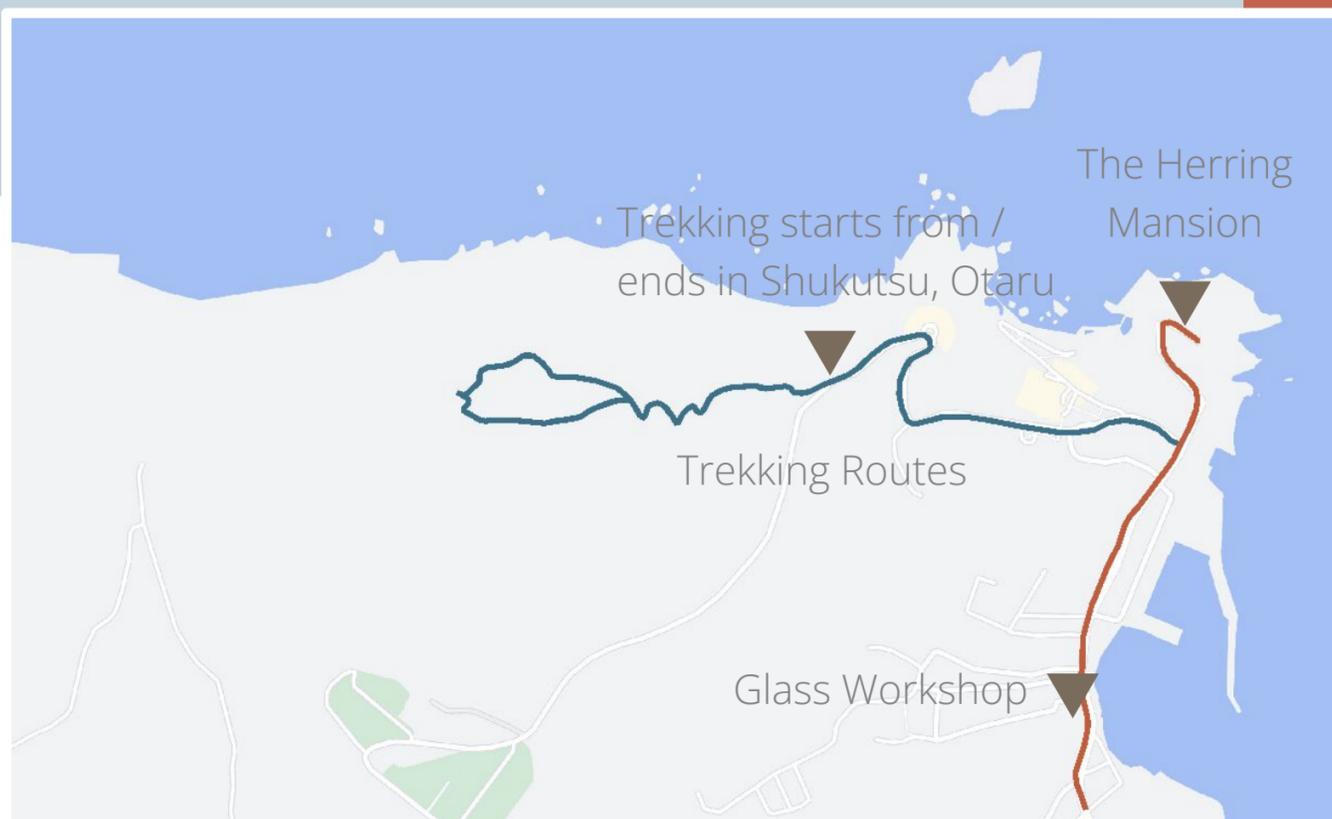
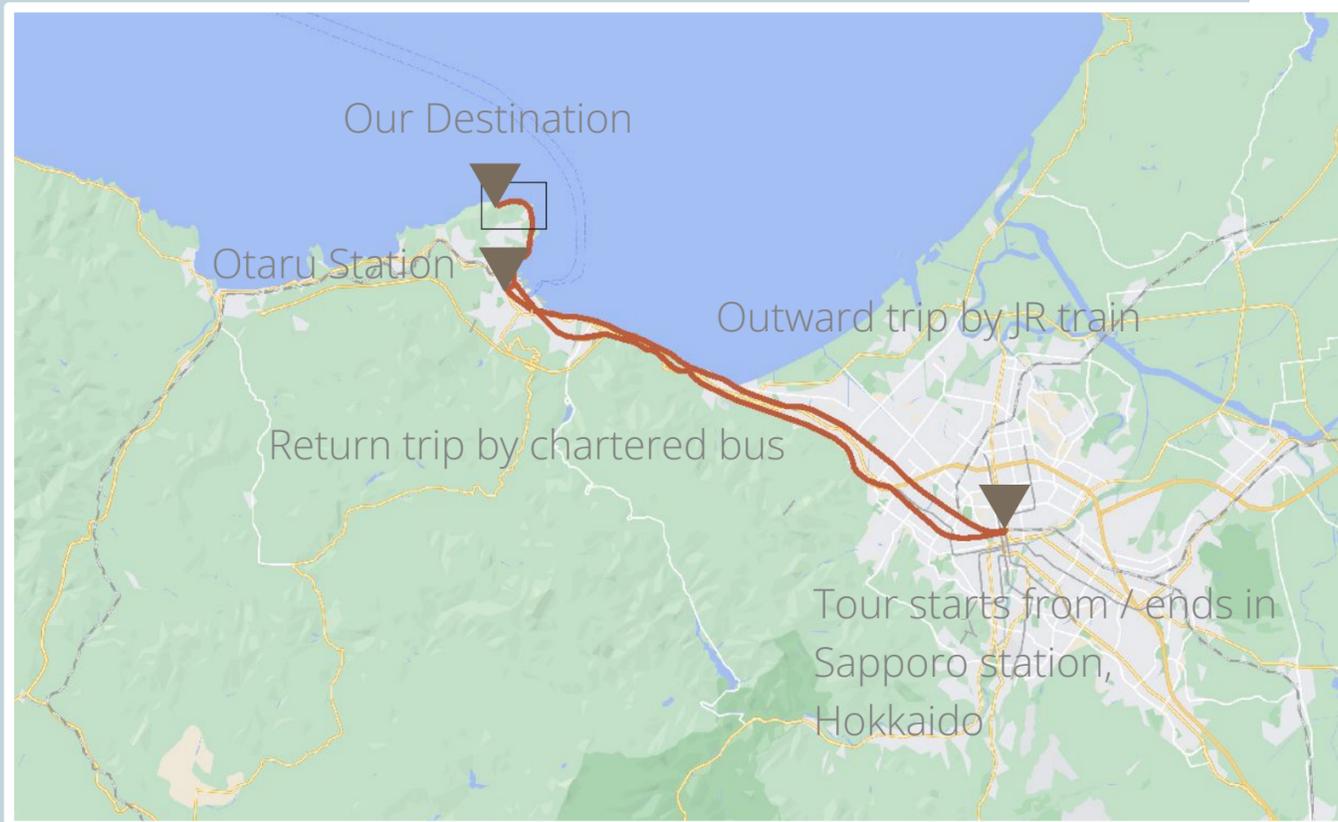
## Tour Dates:

11 September 2023

## Pax:

Minimum 4    Maximum 15

# Route map



# DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

September 11 - Day 1 - Trekking on the Otaru Beach Nature Trail and the White Dragon Trek

We will meet at Sapporo Station at 7:30 am and take a train to Otaru. After a 30-minute walk in the center of Otaru, we will take a bus to the starting point of the trek. Upon arrival at the destination, we will start the trek at 9:30.

**The White Dragon Trek** is called Hakuryu Tainai Meguri in Japanese. The word tainai means “womb” and meguri means “to walk around or visit.” Tainai-meguri is an ancient practice in which ascetic practitioners and itinerant Buddhist monks practiced rituals of death and rebirth in mountains and sacred places across the country.

Located in the Niseko-Shakotan-Otaru Kaigan Quasi-National Park, Mt. Shimoakaiwa is the home of the Akaiwa Hakuryuu Shrine. Legend has it that in that spot, a monk saw a white dragon ascending to heaven in the early Meiji period, and the mountain itself has been revered within various belief systems as a sacred place. The White Dragon Trek is a challenging course that cuts across precipitous cliffs and offers spectacular views of the coast.

## Lunch

BBQ

Enjoy a barbecue meal featuring seafood from Otaru, including herring, which is low in fat and has a sweet flavor. Try sailfin poacher, which is said to be the reincarnation of the white dragon in local legends. The centerpiece of the meal is a pairing of local wine and “Otate” scallops – a delicacy produced in Otaru.

## The Herring Mansion, A Hokkaido Tangible Cultural Property

Herring fishing, which reached its peak in the Meiji period, became the foundation of Otaru's prosperity.

At that time, Otaru attracted migrant fishermen and immigrants from across the country. The Herring Mansion was built in 1897 in Tomari, a village in the Shakotan Peninsula. It was moved to its current location and restored in 1958. A guide familiar with Otaru's history will introduce exhibits from the period and provide a tour of the mansion.

## Workshop on the History of Glassmaking in Otaru– an Integral Part of the Herring Industry

The glass fishing floats used to mark nets in the water were once indispensable to the herring industry in Otaru. However, modernization and a declining fishing industry caused demand for them to evaporate. Now, the only factory in Japan that still produces them is located in Otaru. This workshop is a chance to interact with local fishermen and glassmakers while learning about the culture and history of glassmaking in Otaru.

The tour will depart from the site at 15:30 and will be disbanded at Sapporo Station at 16:30.

## Main Activity:

Trekking along the Otaru Beach Nature Trail and going on the White Dragon Trek

## Difficulty:

3

Activity lasts approx. 3 hours

Distance : 2.0 km trekking

Terrain: Trail and partially paved roads

Gradient: 183 meters

## What's included

- Lunch (BBQ)
- Guide fees
- Glass Fishing Float Workshop fees
- English interpreter fees
- All transport as described in the itinerary
- Travel insurance

## We provide

- Lunch, BBQ with local food
- Drink
- First aid kit
- Safety equipment and maps

## What to bring

Some of the trekking routes include unmaintained trails and rocky areas where ropes and ladders are used.

- Waterproof jacket and pants
- Mid- to high-cut hiking boots
- Base layers top & bottom
- Gloves, beanie, and items to keep you warm
- Sun hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses
- Water bottle or hydration system of more than 1L
- Personal snacks
- Personal medications
- Backpack with enough capacity to carry all the above
- Rain cover for the backpack

## About us

# EZOSIKA TRAVEL CO., LTD.

We are a Sapporo-based company that provides tour operations and tourism consulting. It was founded in 2020 to play a part in sustainable tourism in Hokkaido in the midst of the turmoil caused by COVID-19. In the post-COVID era, the tourism industry must make drastic changes, and it is necessary to flexibly respond to changing situations at unprecedented speeds. Like the sika deer, which is endemic to Hokkaido, we meet the expectations of our customers with strength and broadness of perspective.

Specifically, we provide clients with unique experiences, primarily in Hokkaido. We offer various outdoor activities tailored to fit client needs, such as guided backcountry skiing.

For adventure travel, we provide comprehensive coordination. In collaboration with local research institutes and artists, we are also planning tours that convey the deep spirituality of Ainu culture.





## **Guides**

### **Masafumi TAKAHASHI (Macy)**

He was born in 1978 in Sapporo. After working as a diving guide in Egypt and as an inbound guide at an accommodation facility in Otaru, he has been guiding mainly in Otaru. In winter, he also works as a ski instructor and snowshoe guide. He is one of the few guides who can talk about Otaru's culture, mountains, sea, and snowy nature. Otaru Guide Meister.

## **Partner Company**

### **TARU TABI**

4-5 Minato-cho, Otaru-shi, Otaru,  
Hokkaido, Japan

# Information and Requirements

## Dietary Restrictions

- We will do our best to accommodate any special dietary requests from guests who are vegetarians, or who have food allergies, etc.

## Emergency Response Plan

- In case of emergency, we will follow our accident response manual.
- The guide of this tour has completed an advanced first aid course and always carries a first aid kit with her.
- In the event of a disaster, we will follow "Initial Disaster Response Manual for Foreign Tourists" produced by the Hokkaido Tourism Organization.

## Disclaimer

- There are certain inherent risks in adventure travel. These include, but are not limited to, risks of cycling, hiking, swimming, walking and -on all trips- danger of animals, inaccessibility of medical attention and difficulty in evacuation in the case of a medical emergency. Passengers assume all such risks with regard to these possibilities. By embarking upon his/her trip, the traveller voluntarily assumes all risks involved in such travel, whether expected or unexpected.
- In addition and without limitation, Ezosika Travel Co., Ltd. is not responsible for any injury, loss, death, inconvenience, delay or damage to personal property in connection with the provision of any goods or services, whether resulting from but not limited to acts of God or force majeure, illness, disease, acts of war, civil unrest, insurrection or revolt, animals, strikes or other labor activities, criminal or terrorist activities of any kind, overbooking or downgrading of services, food poisoning, mechanical or other failure of aircraft or other means of transportation or for failure of any transportation mechanism to arrive or depart on time.
- Furthermore, Ezosika Travel Co., Ltd. cannot be held liable by freelance guides for damage or injury to the guide, or damage or injury inflicted by the guide on third parties in any way. By accepting freelance tour assignments, guides automatically waive Ezosika Travel Co., Ltd. from any liability.

## Tour Operator / Contact

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Licensed by the Japan Tourism Agency

in accordance with the provisions of the Travel Agency Law

Licence Number: No. 3-802

Date of License: 5 June 2020

Term of Validity: from 5 June 2020 to 4 June 2025

Domestic Travel Services Manager: NAKANE Hiroki

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