

04-N-01

## Cycle Around The Roof of Japan

Ride, Taste & Experience some of the most scenic National Parks in Nagano



Often referred to as the Roof of Japan, with many peaks over 3,000m, not to mention active volcanos and glaciers too. Nagano's Northern Japan Alps are very impressive, postcard worthy and is well known for having some of the heaviest snowfalls on our planet. With such an abundance of snow, comes pristine clear clean waters which feed and flourish in this beautiful region of Japan. Spectacular rich old green growth forests exist and offer pristine woods, crystal clear rivers and lakes, highlands and marshes. These old growth mountain forests house ancient Shinto Shrines, medieval castles, traditional Japanese architectural villages, and there is a huge plethora of thermal natural hot springs. Imagine pedaling through lush green mountain vistas and teared and terraced rice paddies. Mingling with local folk and discovering how these amazing people live in these steep rugged mountain areas, how they cope with the house-burying snow and live-in harmony with the wildlife, natural weather phenomena and survive & prosper under those thatched roof dwellings. Experience taste and enjoy delicious fruits, vegetables, and fermented foods, which contribute to the longevity of these peoples long

and rich lives. Smooth, scenic, and safe roads await you. Stellar scenery and of viewpoints allowing you to gaze out at and look over idyllic villages and tranquility of this amazing land. With minimal traffic, this is a cyclist dream place to ride and take in the grandeur of this great place, the Japan Alps in Nagano Prefecture. The journey passes through three distinct National Parks, namely, Chubu Sangaku, Myoko-Togakushi and Joshin'etsu Kogen. The rides are sublime and each day other than the splendor of the challenge and the natural physical rewards you will get, you will also be rewarded with daily local "Japanese Sake" and soaking, soothing and rejuvenating in the thermal hot springs the "onsen"; these are only but 2 of the many reasons why you should come and experience this firsthand. The ascent to Shibu Pass (2,172m- above the clouds) must be one of the greatest Japanese cycling challenges to remember. A hike to the world-famous Snow Monkey Park will be an excellent add-on to a bike trip and will conclude a week long journey of riding around the Roof of Japan.

### Highlights:

- View the Japanese Alps and its valley from the top of Matsumoto Castle and understand the topographic character of the area.
- Ride amongst the serene rivers where natural wasabi grows in Azumino, continuing through to Hakuba, the world-renowned ski resort and access point to the Japanese Alps, dotted with emerald green lakes throughout the route.
- Get off the beaten path and explore the small village of Kinasa nestled into the hills and head to the mythical Shrine of Togakushi that still stands from ancient times.
- Taste the iconic fermented products such as miso, pickles, enjoy *oyaki* dumplings, buckwheat noodles, seasonal fruits and drink savor *sake*. Try some of the Japanese wine, many a crafted beer and even some of the more exotic dishes.
- Final attack to Shibu Pass (1300m of vertical ascent), the highest point on the national highway in Japan.

**Location:** Start: Matsumoto City, Nagano Pref. | Finish: Nagano City, Nagano Pref.

through Azumino, Ikeda, Omachi, Hakuba, Ogawa, Iizuna, Obuse and Yamanouchi

**Main Activity:** Cycling  
**Difficulty:** 5  
**Availability:** From mid-April through till late October  
**Tour Duration:** 5 Nights 6 Days  
**Pax:** min 4 / max 8  
**Price per person:** JPY 300,000-400,000

[Route Map](#)

[Day-by-day Itinerary](#)

[What's Included](#)

[We provide & What to bring](#)

[About Us](#)

[Information and Requirements](#)

[Reservation & Cancellation Policy](#)

### Route map



## Day-by-day Itinerary

### Day 1 - Arrive Matsumoto and spend the night in Azumino

Meet with the guide at Matsumoto station and head to the Matsumoto Castle, a National treasure of Japan, with private transfers included. From the Castle Tower, look at Matsumoto basin and the Japanese Alps to grasp the topography and the history of the area. Extend the visit to Miso Brewery and learn about fermented foods, which is a specialty of this region, which boasts the highest production in Japan. Proceeding this head to the hotel by private transfer with briefings and orientation from your guide at the hotel.

<b>Dinner:</b>	Kaiseki course at the hotel
<b>Activity:</b>	Matsumoto Castle Visit and Miso Brewery Visit
<b>Difficulty:</b>	1

### Day 2 - Azumino to Hakuba

Cycle 70km on the best routes through to Hakuba Valley, with relatively few minor ups and downs. Enjoy the views of Japanese Alps lining which are big and bold in your forward view throughout the day. Encounter the timeless scenery of Japan and taste fresh wasabi from the fields in Azumino area along with many other delightful treats. Enjoy a lunch at the lakeside Café. Reaching Hakuba you will find it to be a rich friendly and enchanting village. Catch up on the latest news, engage the friendly locals and enjoy the friendly banter whilst you get ready for dinner. We have many great choices of hotels with fabulous hot springs, many with amazing views of the Japan Alps.

<b>Breakfast:</b>	Japanese set menu
<b>Lunch:</b>	Curry at lakeside café
<b>Dinner:</b>	Buffet with local ingredients at the hotel
<b>Activity:</b>	On road cycling (70km   300m gain   6 hours)
<b>Difficulty:</b>	4

### Day 3 - Hakuba to Togakushi

Move from the Chubu Sangaku National Park through to Myoko - Togakushi range. Private transfer from the hotel to the starting point will take about half an hour. Ride through terraced rice paddies along the scenic country roads, take rest breaks in Kinasa, famously known for “*Oyaki*” dumplings, then attack a challenging 500m uphill climb through to the Togakushi Shrine. Try handmade buckwheat noodles for lunch, another signature dish of the area, then explore the mythical shrine and its sacred forested woods with cedar trees well over 800 years old. Stop by the bamboo craft workshop, and Ninja Museum to see the masterful Ninja tricks and mazes of trap doors and hidden rooms in the Ninja Mansion. Continue cycling down which offers sweeping descent on well-paved tarmac roads with lite traffic until reaching Izuna Kogen. That night enjoys a great hotel which offers sweeping views of the mountain and Nagano City below.

<b>Breakfast:</b>	Buffet
<b>Lunch:</b>	Self-made buckwheat noodle at Soba Museum Ton Kuru Rin
<b>Dinner:</b>	Buffet with locally grown ingredients

**Activity:** On road cycling (60km | 500m gain | 6 hours)

**Difficulty:** 5

### Day 4 - Togakushi to Yudanaka Onsen

Move towards the Joshin'etsu Kogen National Park. Ride through the apple trees farmlands and other orchards and vineyards, stopping at a winery before heading to Obuse. Visit Hokusai Museum and Japanese Confectionery shops. In the afternoon, continue to Yudanaka Onsen to check in to your lodging, known for age old warm hospitality in this olden day Onsen Village still exists. Visit the bathhouse of "Yorozuya", particularly famous for a tangible cultural asset and sooth the muscle pain and prepare for the next day's big challenge.

**Breakfast:** Buffet at the hotel

**Lunch:** Chestnuts Rice Set Meal at Kinokoan

**Dinner:** A course meal using 8 fermented foods and local ingredients

**Activity:** On road cycling (50km | 500m gain | 6 hours)

**Difficulty:** 3

### Day 5 - Yudanaka Onsen to Shiga Kogen

The biggest challenge of the tour awaits - A 1300m up to Shiga Kogen, this highland is designated as UNESCO's Biosphere Reserve, to the highest point of the Country's National Highway, the Shibu Pass (2172m). Ride it or we will arrange you to be transported; starting from 850m above sea level, this is a highly volcanic area where you will encounter a wide range of natural diversity throughout your ascent. After the big climb it's time to refuel, lunch at the highest located bakery/cafe in Japan at the top of Mt. Yokote with 360-degree views. Enjoy panoramic view of Shiga Kogen's topography before descending to Shibu Onsen. Once back in the saddle it's a super long decent and its great fun, but if your prefer and depending on your condition we can arrange you a transfer through to the hotel. You will also visit the Tamamura Honten, which is famous for brewing popular craft beers and also make a tour of the 9 outdoor hot springs in Shibu Onsen.

**Breakfast:** Continental breakfast at the hotel

**Lunch:** Sandwich at Crumpet Café

**Dinner:** Kaiseki course

**Activity:** On road cycling (45km | 1300m gain | 4 hours)

**Difficulty:** 5

### Day 6 - Visit Snow Monkey Park

Walk to the world famous Snow Monkey Park where the monkeys soak in the thermal spring onsen in the winter and learn about the history of peaceful coexistence between humans and wild animals. Proceeding this private transfer to Yudanaka Railway Station where you depart and connecting with the express train to Nagano station at 10:30am.

**Breakfast:** Japanese set menu at the hotel

**Activity:** Hiking to and Snow Monkey Park (2km | 1.5 hours)

**Difficulty:** 1

## Accommodations:



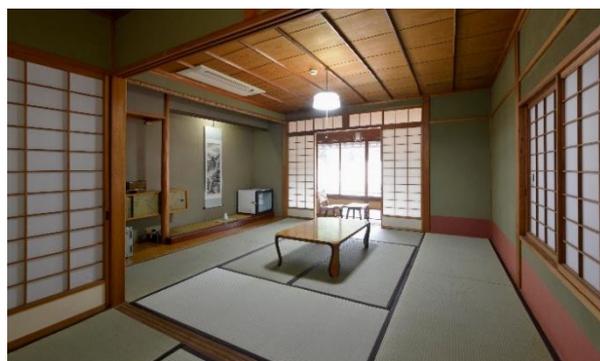
Western Twin Room with ensuite & outdoor onsen at Holiday Yu Shikinosato (Azumino)



Western Japanese Room with ensuite at Hakuba Highland Hotel (Hakuba)



Western Twin Room with ensuite at Hotel Arcadia (Togakushi)



Japanese Room with shared bathroom at Zen Hostel (Yudanaka Onsen)

## What's Included

- All breakfasts, 4 lunches, 5 dinners
- All accommodations (twin share basis)
- Snacks and beverages
- Expertise and services of our experienced guides
- Arrival and departure transfers to and from the railway station
- Van shuttle support with a variety of route options
- Baggage transfers
- Museum & park entry fees
- Special events, including sake tastings and other select attractions.

## What to Bring

### We Provide

- Repair tools
- First-aid kit
- Maps
- Support vehicle

### What to Bring

- Bike with carry bag, helmet, sunglasses & gloves
- Cycling jersey, pants, and shoes
- Windproof / Waterproof jacket and pants
- Insulation
- Sunscreen
- Medications
- Water bottles
- Walking shoes
- Comfortable clothes
- Cash in Japanese Yen
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, alcoholic beverages
- Travel Insurance

## About us

Ski Japan Holidays was established in 2003 and has been providing a comprehensive range of ski travel packages and services to the best snow resorts throughout Japan. We work together with some of the biggest and most well-respected operators in the Japan travel industry, offering the best ski resorts, packages and tours.

Ski Japan Holidays works with Local, State and National tourism offices to better promote this beautiful area that we live work and play in and we very much look forward to showing off this great area to you.



**Jason Jansen, President**

## Our Team

### Guides



#### **Jon Daily, Lead Guide (Ski Japan Holidays)**

Born and raised in Southern California, with a great passion for ocean sports. In 1980 he moved to Aspen Colorado, a famous North America ski area, where he learned to ski, snowboard and telemark in winter and biking and kayaking in summer. Moving to Hawaii in 1983, continuing his passions for the ocean, he then met and married a Japanese woman and moved to Japan in 1987 at age 24. After moving to Japan, he studied martial arts intensively, to the extent that he obtained his third-degree black belt in Karate in Tokyo. Wanting to leave the city, he came to live in the small village of Ogawa in Nagano prefecture in 2005. Taking advantage of his bilingual ability, he then began his career as an outdoor and cultural guide based in Hakuba valley. Presently he has also taken up farming to self-sustain himself and his family raising two daughters on their home-grown rice and vegetables. His present job involves taking foreign visitors on cultural tours around Nagano, especially to Jigokudani Snow Monkey Park for over 10 years. He is certified in Wilderness First Aid.



#### **Toshu Arai, Cycling guide (Representative of Otari Fatbike Center)**

He took his master's degree in synthetic organic chemistry at Yamagata University and worked at a chemical company, involved in manufacturing technology. When he started riding a road bike it was as a training for snowboarding. Then his cycling mate invited him to try the Mt. Norikura Hill Climb Race which eventually fascinated him and since then he entered many hill-climb races. In 2013, he moved to Otari village in Hakuba Valley (Nagano prefecture), wanting to live in the snow country. After moving there, he started new career as bike trip guide and owns a bike repair workshop at

Otari Fatbike Center. His signature tour is fat bike ride in snow and offers road bike and e-bike tours in Nagano prefecture, preferring to ride on the back roads with less traffic and great the sceneries. He is the founder/manager of Otari Hill Climb courses, unique cycling courses that takes advantage of the valley with many hills and few flat areas. Occasionally he also works as a recyclable energy consultant at the village council. He has qualification for Wilderness First Aid (50 hours). He is a member of the Japan Mountain Bike Association.

## Back Office

### Coordinator



**Ayuko Arai**

### Reservation Consultants (Ski Japan Holidays)



**Yoko Nakano**

**(Reservation Manager)**



**Yui Pope**



**Satomi Maruyama**



**Yumiko Mayuzumi**

### Administrative (Ski Japan Holidays)



**Mika Matsuzawa**

**(Office Manager)**



**Mako Hirooka**

**(Account Manager)**



**Matt Skinner**

**(Managing Director)**

## Information and Requirements

### Dietary Restrictions

At the time of the booking, SJH confirms the participant's dietary requirement through the agent. Catering to most dietary requirements is fine as well as vegetarians and vegans. Please make us aware of any allergies you may have in advance, such as those which may cause such symptoms as, anaphylaxis etc. However, please note that soy sauce is an indispensable condiment in Japan and it often contains wheat gluten (which affects those who has celiac disease). As gluten-free soy sauce is yet to be a common choice in Japanese restaurants in rural areas, you may have to substitute by one of the famous Japanese salt. Likewise, soba (buck-wheat noodle, not a gluten) is an important food product in Japan (especially in Nagano), and it is difficult to substitute when it comes to the soba making activity incorporated in a day's program. Therefore, if a guest has allergies to buckwheat, we may be able to offer substitute food such as a rice ball for this leg in this tour. Otherwise, we may ask the guest to carry your own reliable food as a back-up.

### Emergency Response Plan

SJH staffs have longstanding relationships with our suppliers, including restaurants, hotels, services, and transportation providers. These partners know our standards and have been thoroughly inspected by our staff to make sure they comply with all local regulations regarding health and hygiene. Our activity guides are trained in first aid (including wilderness first-aid) and aware of the health regulations as well as Ski Japan Holidays practices and protocols. We will follow all procedures to ensure the journey is safe. Everyone involved in running the journey follows governments health and safety guideline, including regular staff health and temperature monitoring. Our office is experienced in handling emergencies and have the contacts and knowledge to support guests 24/7 in the event of accidents and medical challenges.

### Weather Conditions

High mountains of Nagano all receive their fair share of snow but in general, the Japan Sea side of Honshu has much harsher winters than the Pacific coast. Thus the North Alps get a lot more snow than the Southern Alps. Winter snow can last through November to early April. Cherry Blossom front advances to Nagano from mid-April to early May, when the last frost is observed and the riding season starts. The mountains are affected by a rainy season from early June until mid-July, around 20 July. While mountains are subject to changeable weather and must be respected, in general, summer in Nagano is pleasant. Summer mornings tend to be better than the afternoons when thunderstorms are common. After mid-August, the temperature in the morning and the evening drops significantly, and typhoons may develop occasionally. In mid-October the first frost is observed, and autumn foliage is at its peak by the end of October.

## Reservation & Cancellation Policy

### Booking

Bookings must be made by email to [bookings@japanspecialists.com](mailto:bookings@japanspecialists.com). Bookings are considered secure upon receipt of designated payment.

### Pricing

All prices are in Japanese Yen and include Japanese consumption tax as well as service charges and hot spring tax where applicable. Prices are subject to change without notice and may be subject to re-issue if incorrect through error or omission.

### Payment

Once a booking has been confirmed to the agent by email from the Ski Japan Holidays reservation consultant, full payment will be required 30 days prior to the service commencement date. Failing to meet the required deposit date may lead to an automatic cancellation of the booking. Bookings made within 30 days to the service date require immediate full payment, or as otherwise specified by the reservation consultant.

All payments must be made to Ski Japan Holidays by credit card or bank transfer.

All agent remittances require supporting booking information including agent's name, Ski Japan Holidays reference number, guest names, booking amount to be allocated to each booking.

Credit Card Payment: Only Mastercard and Visa Cards are accepted. Payments incur 3.5% surcharge.

Bank Transfer Payment: The Agent is responsible for all bank transfer fees charged by your bank, intermediary bank or receiving bank fees charged by your international transfer company. Any shortfall in payment must be paid prior to the guest's arrival.

### Cancellation Policy

Cancellation request must be made by email to [bookings@japanspecialists.com](mailto:bookings@japanspecialists.com) on or before the specified payment dates.

Date of Cancellation	Cancellation Fee
30-22 Days before service date	0% - Full Refund
21-15 Days before service date	20%
14-8 Days before service date	50%
Within 7 days of service date	100%

**Disclaimer of Liability**

No refund will be given for any reason after the tour contract is concluded if the guests leave the tour course, or if the guests do not take some of the services in the tour.

We may refuse to continue participating in the tour if the guest acts against the law or public order and morals, or if he / she does not keep the designated meeting time during the tour.

Ski Japan Holidays and our tours are covered by liability insurance, but this applies only when the accident is caused by our fault. It does not apply to accidents caused by the fault of the guest or a third party. This responsibility and the amount of compensation for damages are determined based on the laws in Japan. We cannot be held responsible for any injury, loss, accident, and delay or any other irregularity outside of our control.

Ski Japan Holidays cannot under any circumstances be held responsible for weather conditions. No holiday can be cancelled, altered, or amended on the basis of weather conditions.

Ski Japan Holidays reserves the right to correct any errors or omissions in its published materials and to amend these Terms and Conditions at any time as the result of any material changes to legislation or regulation.

**Tour Operator / Contact**

# Ski Japan Holidays

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