



If you fancy doing some trip, have some savings and are eager to discover part of Japan, do not hesitate to take a trip to the Eastern part of the northernmost island of the country, Hokkaido. It is possible to go by the *Shinkansen* (bullet train). Taking a plane, however, is more convenient, both in time and money.



Kushiro river at night



Washo market

To begin with, you can fly directly from Tokyo to Kushiro, being this city a perfect place to start off your journey. In downtown Kushiro you can go see one of the top bridges in Hokkaido, Nusamai Bridge, and walking towards it, you might spot four Bronze statues, representing the four seasons. From there, you can admire a beautiful view of the sea and feel the soothing breeze.



Akan Lake

Don't miss the opportunity to enjoy a delicious meal in Washo Market, considered the kitchen of Kushiro residents; crabs, salmon and other fresh seafood can be found in here, as well as other traditional dishes such as rice bowl with your choice of *sashimi* (raw fish). Within one hour bus you can go to Akan Lake, where you can relax yourself with the nature and enjoy a serene view while strolling along the lake.

Continuing northward, about 3 hours by train, you get to Abashiri. While there, the famous Abashiri old prison, which has been turned into a museum, can be visited. There is also a rich part of the Ainu culture, whose

descendants continue to keep their traditions and handicraft. Valiant enough, try raw “*kujira*” (whale meat), which being a mammal, its meat both tastes and looks similar to beef.



*Sunset from the
Shiretoko Peninsula*



*Shiretoko
Five Lakes*

From Abashiri, going eastward along the Okhotsk Sea, in around 50 minutes train you arrive to Shiretok-shari station, from where a bus to Utoro can be conveniently taken. Utoro represents a perfect place to set off a one-day or two-days trip to the Shiretoko peninsula and the

National Park, world heritage since 2005. To make the most of your visit to Shari town, there are some sightseeing buses options that can cover all the most spectacular and stunning spots, such as the Oshikoshin falls, the Oronko rock and the Shiretoko Five Lakes. In addition, if you have some energy left, take a two-hour stroll well inside the National Park, to observe each one of the five lakes, and why not encounter some wild bears in their natural habitat.

Take it for sure, though, that Japanese might come extremely handy around these places, since people understand almost nothing of English; it is convenient then, at least while asking for directions, places, food, tickets, prices, and of course whatever else you'd like to do.